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SAVONAROLA

A BIOGRAPHY
IN DRAMATIC EPISODES

BY

WILLIAM VAN WYCK

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TO

JESSICA DAVIS VAN WYCK

Lady, thou wouldst not lack the wonder-fire
Had I the glowing words that poets say—
Throbbing all-limpid from a lyric lyre
That hath immortalized a yesterday.

But my poor rhymes have none of that old ease
Which Petrarch brought to Laura with his pen ;
Which swept an Abelard toward Heloïse,
Until he was the sorriest of men.

Gone is the art that made a Dante turn
Words into suns ; by which Rossetti wrought
In filigree, to make all lovers yearn
To put Love's golden nuggets into thought.

My verses falter forth on leaden feet.
All that I sing, is that I love thee, Sweet.

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LUNG'ARNO

CARNIVAL

CHARACTERS

A CLOWN.
A COLUMBINE.
A ROOSTER.
A PIERROT.
A DRAGON.
A DONKEY.
FIRST NOBLEMAN.
SECOND NOBLEMAN.
THIRD NOBLEMAN.
A STREET ARAB.
A YOKEL.
A WASHERWOMAN.
FIRST FRIAR.
SECOND FRIAR.
A WOMAN DISGUISED AS A CAT.
A PROSTITUTE.
A CARTER.
AN OLD HAG.
A TINKER.
A DRUNKARD.
A BULLY.

Friars, Guardsmen, Revellers, Noblemen, Prostitutes, Old Women, a Jewess, Bullies, etc.

(The Square of New Saint Mary's during carnival. Near one of the goal-posts of the "pallio" is a great bonfire. This, and flaring torches light up the darkness of midnight. As the curtain rises, the stage is empty, but the sounds of revelry are heard in the distance, which come nearer and nearer. The sound of shouts and laughter and the strum of instruments is heard. A group of revellers, who play at crack-the-whip, enter at the right. Each time the end man falls down, there is a burst of laughter. Many people in fancy dress enter singing.)

A CLOWN *(singing.)*

O lay ! O la ! And here we are !
The carnival is on the wane.
O lay ! O la ! And here we are !
Come all, and join in the refrain !

CHORUS

O lay ! O la ! O la ! O lay !
To-day at carnival we play.
We play at carnival to-day !

CLOWN *(singing.)*

O la ! O lay ! O la ! O lay !
Come all ye flirts who would be gay,
And kiss the merry hours away !
And kiss the merry hours away !

CHORUS

O lay ! O la ! O la ! O lay !
Come kiss the merry hours away !

(The people playing at crack-the-whip pass out at right. The singers join hands and making a huge ring, caper around the bonfire singing.)

O lay ! O la ! O la ! O lay !
Come kiss the merry hours away !

(Suddenly a member of the group kisses a wench wildly, and she giggles. Grabbing her in his arms, he rushes off with her at left, to the wild applause of the other members of the group.)

A COLUMBINE *(laughing.)*

That's the idea.

A ROOSTER

Would you like to be served the same ?

COLUMBINE *(laughing.)*

All who serve me, pay.

(She giggles.)

ROOSTER

I have a florin.

COLUMBINE

You need two.

A PIERROT *(intervening.)*

Only Pierrot goes with Columbine. I have two florins.

(Columbine smiles at him and nods assent, and he is about to go off with her.)

ROOSTER *(furiously.)*

She's mine, I asked her first.

(Wild with rage, he draws a knife. The Columbine screams. The Pierrot draws his knife and rushes at the Rooster, both engaging in a mad brawl.)

A DRAGON

Friends, this is going to be good. I'll bet on the Cock.

A DONKEY

I'll bet six florins on the Pierrot.

COLUMBINE

Stop them ! Stop them !

(Three noblemen who have entered the square, look on with interest.)

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Just as it should be, Pierrot fighting for Columbine.

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Fancy fighting over a common street slut.

(The Pierrot and the Rooster are at it hot and heavy. Suddenly the Rooster slips on a bit of refuse, and before he can get up, the Pierrot is upon him and sticks his dagger in his groin.)

THIRD NOBLEMAN

A dirty trick.

MANY VOICES

Bravo, Pierrot !

FIRST NOBLEMAN *(to third nobleman.)*

Under the same circumstances, you might be tempted to do the same thing. It's better to stick than to get stuck.

(The Rooster is left lying where he has fallen, and Pierrot and Columbine go off arm in arm.)

A STREET ARAB *(to a companion.)*

Didja see tha poke he got ?

A YOKEL

A fine fight.

A WASHERWOMAN

Call the guard !

(Five Capuchin Friars enter on the left, and seeing the wounded man, rush to his side.)

A FRIAR

We must get him to a hospital.

ROOSTER *(feebly.)*

No use Father, I'm done for.

SECOND FRIAR

Let's take him to some nearer place.

A WOMAN DISGUISED AS A CAT *(timidly.)*

My house is hardby the Trinity Bridge, you may take him there.

(The friars lift the wounded man tenderly, and take him off at left, the woman following. The sounds of revelry are heard in the distance.)

A PROSTITUTE

Them's kind friars. Tha Rooster was a fool.

A CARTER

All men who is crazy about wenches is fools.

PROSTITUTE *(sneering.)*

Whereja git yore wisdom ?

CARTER

Not from mangy whores...

(The prostitute spits in his face, and the carter gives her a heavy clout with the back of his hand, and she rushes off at right, crying.)

AN OLD HAG

That's the way to treat 'em !

(A pickpocket attempts to steal the carter's wallet, to be caught in the act.)

CARTER *(in a rage.)*

Ya dirty bastard ! I'll show ya how ter take wot I wants.

(Grabbing the feckless man by the throat, he half tears off his ear with one jerk of a huge fist.)

A TINKER

Bravo, carter, that's tha way ter do it !

(Screaming with pain, the pickpocket rushes off at right.)

CARTER

No man gits tha best o' me.

(A drunkard enters, staggering wildly, and is greeted with cries of joy and hoots of derision by the crowd.)

DRUNKARD

Thish nysh, playsh, by keysh Shaint Pe'er.

(A roar of laughter greets this remark.)

Wazza ma'er ? I shaid this nysh playsh !

(Solemnly he sits down in the street, and a group of small boys dance around him for a few moments, screaming shrilly.)

Zash berrer.

(A youth sneaks up behind him and clouts him over the head with a stave, knocking him unconscious. There is a sudden sound of screaming, and a young Jewess enters at left to be rushed off at right by a crowd of bullies.)

A BULLY *(as he sweeps along at the head of his gang.)*

Get to the Ghetto, you dirty Jew slut. What do you mean by showing your face on a Christian holiday ?

(After they have disappeared, the screams of the woman are heard, becoming ever fainter and fainter, and die away in the distance.)

CARTER

That's tha fun. Come on all of ya, let's go Jew baiting.

(This suggestion is greeted with a roar of approval, and the people surge off at right, leaving the square to the street arabs and the unconscious drunkard lying on the cobbles. The street arabs join hands and dance around the fire in a huge circle.)

A STREET ARAB

Let's play at stones.

(The circle breaks up and splits into two groups, each forming a side. Picking up cobbles, the boys fling them at one another, many of them falling, when hit. Suddenly, at the height of this play which grows more and more furious, the sound of a clarion-call is heard, and then the tread of marching feet.)

SECOND STREET ARAB

Look out, here comes the guard !

(The boys rush off at left, leaving five or six of their number unconscious, and two of them dead. A Company of Guardsmen of the Signory enter at right. Without a glance at the dead or wounded, or at the unconscious drunkard who lies in the middle of the square, they march out at left. In the distance, the sounds of revelry are heard.)

CURTAIN

BURGEOIS

CHARACTERS

DOMENICO TOSSI, a Maker of Poisons.
A CUSTOMER.
GIOVANNI VASSALO, a Caterer.
CARLO BERCHIELLI, a Jeweller.
GANNA MARTELLI, his Mistress.
GIULIA DOTTI, Marchioness of Montebello.
LUIGI D'OSSO, apprenticed to Berchielli.
ONORE PASQUALI, a Resident of Verona.
ELEONORA, his Wife.
AN AGENT OF THE MEDICI.

I

(The shop of Domenico Tossi, a poison-maker. A counter extends the length of one wall, and on it are scales of various sizes and the accessories of a woman's toilet. Behind this counter are curtained shelves. From the age-black rafters of the ceiling, between which is "The Dance of Death" done in fresco, hang the skeletons of bats and other small animals, the dried bodies of human monsters, the mummified head of a woman, two or three half-blown bladders, a porcupine fish, several large glass retorts, a metal retort, and the skin of a large tropical serpent. Above the door that leads to the street, is a great dried octopus. These objects almost brush the heads of customers who come in, and lend a sinister aspect to the place. Due to the small amount of light that comes through the tiny windows looking on the street, the room is lighted by flickering oil lamps. At the far end of the counter is a tiny forge and a huge bellows. Tossi, affecting the garb of the aristocracy, is magnificently dressed in tunic, doublet, hose, and shoes of imperial purple. About his neck is a golden chain wrought to represent ivy leaves, at the end of which is a great amethyst bezoar in the form of a wild boar's head. A great cloak of orange velvet is lying across the counter, together with a cap of the same material and a slender sword with a diamond-studded hilt. The poison-maker is an old man, slightly stooped, with a completely bald head, and a wrinkled and sagging skin that gives him the look of an evil

tropical vulture. A few seconds after the rise of the curtain, a customer enters the store. He is a young nobleman, magnificently dressed in doublet, tunic, and hose of lemon yellow brocade. His shoes and his cloak are of black brocade embroidered with silver.)

TOSSI *(smiling.)*

And how may I serve you, Sir ?

CUSTOMER

I wish to select a comb for a lady who has been kind to me.

TOSSI

I have a beautiful variety of combs.

(He picks one up from the counter.)

This is Roman work.

(He hands it to the customer who takes it.)

CUSTOMER *(indifferently.)*

Rather pretty, but not massive enough.

(He weighs it in his hand.)

In fact, it seems rather light.

(He taps it.)

And it sounds hollow.

TOSSI *(significantly.)*

It is not as light as it seems. Like a serpent, it has fangs for teeth.

(He takes the comb from the customer, and pressing a secret spring, releases a tiny trap-door.)

It can be filled with the ichor of quietude, Sir, and the ichor works as quickly or as slowly as one wishes.

CUSTOMER *(shuddering.)*

I wish nothing like that. Donna Felippa Baldi —

TOSSI

Exactly. Here is the very thing for her.

(He picks up a mirror wrought in gold to represent a mermaid. The arms, held high above the head, curve to encircle the glass, and the long tail forms the handle of the mirror. The body is magnificently wrought.)

CUSTOMER *(taking mirror.)*

This is exceedingly beautiful! How much is it?

TOSSI

Two hundred ducats, Sir.

CUSTOMER

That is a vast sum for a bauble.

TOSSI *(smiling.)*

But no vast sum for a lover, Sir.

CUSTOMER

I'll take it.

TOSSI *(taking mirror from him.)*

Let me put it in a casket for you, Sir.

(As the customer counts out the money from a girdle-wallet worn at the thigh, Tossi presses a spring in the back of the mirror, releasing a tiny trap-door. Slipping the contents of a phial into the aperture, he snaps the door shut, and puts the mirror in a copper and silver casket, and hands it to the customer, who has put a pile of gold coins on the counter.)

CUSTOMER

Better count the coins.

TOSSI

That is not in the least necessary, thank you Sir, good day, and may fortune smile you on.

(The customer goes out.)

Ah, false Pippa, tonight you will be suckled by death, and your bed will be so cold, that even your lover will not be able to warm it ! Nor will you be the first to die over a pair of breasts. Those of the mermaid are anything but healthy. Jàbir ibn Hàyan is a friend to cuckolds. I must get—

(He is interrupted by the entrance of Giovanni Vassalo, a rotund old merchant who is dressed as befits a bourgeois tradesman of the time.)

Welcome Giovanni ! And how's business today ?

VASSALO *(with a great show of heartiness.)*

Excellent friend, excellent ! I have just received the custom of the Magnificent, and it will mean more to me than all of my other business put together. Lorenzo is a princely entertainer. I'm a made man. How's business with you ?

TOSSI *(shaking his head.)*

Bad Giovanni, bad ! The Florentines are not hating much this season. There's been little or no demand for poison, and I've such a pretty variety too. There's no better mandrake in Florence. Colmella calls it half-a-man. The root is so vindictive that it gives a shriek when dragged from the earth and strikes dead the person who has had the presumption to dig it.

VASSALO *(aghast.)*

A wicked plant, a wicked plant !

(He crosses himself.)

God grant that I may never meet with it.

TOSSI *(smiling.)*

It is naught compared with the queen mother of poisons, otherwise known as leopard's bane, wolf's bane, or woman's bane.

(Aside.)

Ah Pippa, be 'ware, be 'ware of the mermaid !

(Aloud.)

It comes from the ancient city of Aconae, hence its name, aconitum. It has received much praise from Theophrastus, Ovid and

Juvenal. Plutarch tells us that Orodes fell into a disease that became a dropsy. Thinking to set his father forward, Phraates gave him a drink of the juice of aconitum. The dropsy received the poison, and the one drove the other out of the body of Orodes and set him on foot again.

VASSALO *(impressed.)*

You are a learned man, Domenico.

TOSSI

But business is bad. The Florentines are forgetting how to hate. All they do nowadays is to love. There's a fair commerce in love philtres.

VASSALO *(sighing gustily.)*

I wish that I had a sure love-philtre. My Nonna—

TOSSI

A sure love-philtre ! I have a love-philtre that's the surest of the sure.

VASSALO *(eagerly.)*

Let me have it, Domenico. My Nonna begins to weary of me.

(Tossi takes a small phial from a shelf and hands it to him.)

TOSSI

This is the philtre of philtres and compounded by myself. First, the powder of the spider to give the lady wisdom to love. Next, the eye of a tom-cat killed in the act of copulation, so that she may find her way. Then the heart of the serpent so that she may know her coil to be graceful. Then the hair of a wolf that she may have zest. Next, the brain of a cat that she may go stealthily. Then the brain of a newt that she may swim in love's ichor. The pad of a lizard that she may come quickly. The gills of a remora that she may live when the breath be out of her. The beak of a swallow that she may ask for more. And lots and lots of flies, particularly the migratory fly from Spain. These boiled, dried, powdered, and compounded together and no woman can resist you.

VASSALO

The migratory fly from Spain ?

TOSSI

Dried, and it makes a wondrous aphrodisiac all of itself. But mixed with these other ingredients and the Mother of God Herself could not resist you. The migratory fly from Spain that hums the song of the cantharides. Give your Nonna two drops of the phial and she will leave you no sleep to-night.

VASSALO

Thank you Domenico, for this I'll send you a repast that will be worthy of a de' Medici.

(He rushes out.)

TOSSI

No sleep for Giovanni to-night. However, Pippa will rest quiet, ah how quiet she will rest !

(He takes out a paper and begins to jot down items, murmuring as he does so.)

Aloes, saffron, myrrh, betony, pipinella, Armenian bole, assay cups, bezoar-stones—

CURTAIN

II

(The jewel shop of Carlo Berchielli on the Lung' Arno near the old bridge. It is a tiny place lit by diamond-pane windows that look out over the river. Between the windows is a door that opens on the street. A long counter runs the length of the store, and before it are rush-bottom stools for customers. Opposite the entrance to the shop is a door that leads to a workroom. The door is covered by a brocade curtain. Behind the counter are drawers and shelves on which many boxes are placed. Berchielli is a swarthy man of about fifty, with jet black hair, and a great jet black moustache. He has piercing grey eyes and a huge paunch that proclaims him to be inordinately fond of his dinner. As the curtain rises, he is seen talking with his mistress, Ganna Martelli, a young woman of extraordinary beauty.)

GANNA

But, Carlo, I want them.

BERCHIELLI *(laughing shortly.)*

You're not the first to want 'em.

GANNA

Let me look at them again.

(Berchielli turns to the shelves, and opening a casket, takes

out a chain of magnificent emeralds, which he holds to the light.)

BERCHIELLI

No, my dear, green does not suit you, you are for fire.

(He puts the emeralds in the casket, and the casket on the shelf.)

GANNA *(pouting.)*

Green suits me well enough. The trouble with you, Berchielli, is that you are stingy.

BERCHIELLI *(rolling his eyes and raising his arms in despair.)*

What in the name of Heaven is worse than a spoiled woman, unless it be a spoiled child? Have I not given you beautiful jewels, Ganna ?

GANNA

Have given, yes ; but I am interested in are giving. I want those emeralds, Carlo. I'll give you a kiss for them.

BERCHIELLI

They are worth more than a kiss from even you, Ganna.

GANNA

I'll give you the wickedest kiss in the world for them, a kiss undreamed of even by you, Carlo.

BERCHIELLI *(amused.)*

Now you're beginning to be interesting.

GANNA

Beginning ? You are not very complimentary. Please give me those emeralds.

BERCHIELLI *(laughing.)*

I'm not to be wheedled out of them. No, not for all the kisses in the world ! Moreover, I've sold 'em.

GANNA

To whom ?

BERCHIELLI

To the Magnificent.

GANNA

Does it mean his custom ?

BERCHIELLI

I hope so, but it's by no means certain. He sends his agents all over the world for treasure-trove, and gets things before most of us can lay our hands on 'em. I got this from a merchant in Genoa, and quite by accident. They are a part of the loot taken from a ship captured off the coast of Africa.

GANNA *(wistfully.)*

Are they very wonderful emeralds ?

BERCHIELLI *(enthusiastically.)*

The finest I've ever seen in thirty years's experience. One hundred in the chain and very few flaws.

GANNA

That's wonderful. When do you send them to Lorenzo ?

BERCHIELLI

His agent will be here any minute now. Run along, Ganna, I see the Marchioness of Montebello coming in.

(Ganna rushes out at left, as the marchioness enters at right. She is a very stout old woman, and of immense self-importance.)

MARCHIONESS *(imperiously.)*

What have you in opals, Berchielli ?

BERCHIELLI *(smiling.)*

Something marvellous. Do you like beetles ?

MARCHIONESS *(raising her eyebrows.)*

I hate beetles !

BERCHIELLI

I don't think that you will hate this one.

(He pulls open a drawer beneath the counter, and takes out a gold chain on which dangles a beetle wrought in gold. The back and head of the insect are two superb opals which reflect brilliant hues of orange, red, peacock-blue, and green. The body of the beetle is worked out to the minutest detail, the whole effect being realistic, save for the romanticism of the gorgeous and unnatural coloring.)

MARCHOINESS *(snatching the bauble from him.)*

It is beautiful, Berchielli ! How much ?

BERCHIELLI

Two hundred ducats, your ladyship.

MARCHIONESS *(screaming.)*

Two hundred ducats ! You're crazy, Berchielli !

BERCHIELLI

By the blessed saints, I make but the barest profit !

MARCHIONESS

One hundred ducats, Berchielli.

BERCHIELLI

Is is not possible. I can't think of letting it go for less than a hundred and fifty.

MARCHIONESS *(firmly.)*

One hundred ducats, Berchielli.

BERCHIELLI

Rather than displease your ladyship, I'll lose money on it. You may have the beetle for one hundred and twenty-five ducats.

MARCHIONESS *(firmly.)*

One hundred ducats, Berchielli.

BERCHIELLI *(shrugging his shoulders.)*

Is it not possible...

MARCHIONESS *(screaming.)*

One hundred ducats, Berchielli.

(Without waiting for a reply, and clasping the pendant in a pudgy fist, she waddles out of the shop.)

BERCHIELLI *(laughing.)*

The old fool ! Now she'll tell all of her friends what a bargain she got, and it cost me twenty-five ducats.

(A man enters the store.)

AGENT

My master has sent me to inform you that he is pleased to take the emeralds at your price and he asks you to come to the palace with them immediately.

BERCHIELLI

With pleasure.

(He takes a casket from the shelf.)

Luigi ! Luigi !

(Luigi d'Osso rushes in from the work room.)

LUIGI

Yes, Sir ?

BERCHIELLI

Mind the shop, I'm going to the de' Medici palace.

(Luigi gives Berchielli his cap and helps him on with his cloak, which he takes from a wall.)

Thank you, Luigi. I'll be back in an hour.

(He goes out with the agent of the de' Medici.)

LUIGI *(calling.)*

Ganna ! Ganna !

(Ganna comes running in.)

The old Devil's gone.

GANNA

Now we can talk.

(She perches on the counter, after kissing Luigi impetuously.)

He refused to give me the necklace, the stingy old beast. Had we got it, we'd have been free to run away and start that place of our own in Verona, Luigi.

LUIGI

Never mind, darling. He'll be back presently with the necklace as there's still work to do on it, and...

(He pulls out a dagger from under his apron.)

Here's the sweetest little persuader in the world to convince a stingy old man that he must part with one emerald necklace. When he returns, the necklace will be ours, for he won't live long enough to cry out once even.

GANNA *(clapping her hands.)*

That's fine ! We'll go to Verona to-night and there we'll start...

(The sound of customers entering causes her to look up, and jumping off the counter, she runs out noiselessly at the left. Onore Pasquali and his wife approach Luigi.)

PASQUALI

Is this the shop of Carlo Berchielli ?

LUIGI

It is, Sir.

PASQUALI

Are you Carlo Berchielli ?

LUIGI

No Sir, he is at the de' Medici palace. Will not you and the lady be seated ?

(They sit down before the counter.)

I'm in charge until my master returns. What may I have the pleasure of showing you ?

PASQUALI

I am Onore Pasquali of Verona and I wished to have something from the shop of the famous Carlo Berchielli before we returned.

LUIGI

What would you like to see ?

ELENA PASQUALI

Something very rare.

(Luigi takes a box from the shelf and opening it, puts a trinket into her hands.)

LUIGI

Note, Madam, that the elephant is made of a baroque pearl. The howdah is of rubies and sapphires, and the driver in gold and onyx holds a diamond ankus. The whole is mounted on a great emerald which is enclosed in a wreath of pink and black pearls. It's worth a king's ransom.

ELENA PASQUALI *(examining the trinket rapturously.)*

O look, Onore !

(She hands her husband the trinket, which he examines with great interest.)

Did you ever see anything so wonderful in all your life ?

PASQUALI

It's magnificent.

(To Luigi.)

How much is this ?

(He hands him the trinket.)

LUIGI

I cannot say, Sir. My master puts a price on everything himself. He will be back in an hour.

PASQUALI

Then tell him I shall return this afternoon.

(To his wife.)

You shall have it my dear.

(They rise, and Luigi bows them out. Ganna rushes in.)

GANNA

What an open-handed gentleman ! If Carlo were only like that ! Wait until this afternoon with your dagger, Luigi. The gentleman may pay Carlo in gold, and then we'll have the money as well as the necklace with which to set up a little shop in Verona. Perhaps Onore Pasquali and his lady will give us their custom.

LUIGI *(kissing her fondly.)*

What a clever girl you are, Ganna !

(Ganna claps her hands and then flings her arms about his neck, and they embrace delightedly.)

CURTAIN

PEASANT

CHARACTERS

MARIA ZUZZI, a Washerwoman.
LISA NULLO, another Washerwoman.

(At the edge of the river, beneath the old bridge. As the curtain rises, Maria Zuzzi and Lisa Nullo are on their knees scrubbing clothes. Maria, who is dressed in a single garment which is a kind of smock, is a great bloated creature of about fifty. Lisa is young and pretty, and evidently new to the business of washing clothes.)

LISA *(stopping and wiping her forehead with the back of her hand.)*

Holy Virgin, but it's hard work !

MARIA *(scrubbing away for dear life.)*

Yo're noo at it, aincha, dearie ?

LISA *(scrubbing.)*

Yes, it's hard work, ain't it ?

MARIA *(laughing.)*

You ain't got nawthin', wait till ya gits a real worshin' wot'll make ya sweat. Tired ?

LISA

Awful tired.

(She sighs, and Maria gets up and sits down by her clothes basket.)

MARIA

Then come here and sit down fer a bit.

(Lisa gets up and sits down by Maria.)

I'm most done.

(She takes a piece of soiled clothing from the basket, and holding it up to the light, looks at it.)

Them's Fra Biaggio's didies.

(She giggles.)

Ya learns a lot o' life by worshin', ya does. I gits ter know lots about people from sheets, shifts and tablecloths, most as much as a priest does from confessional. When I sees the table linen from the Vassisi palace, I knows every time Prince Paolo gits drunk. I loves ter know things about people. Say, didja hear that Lorenzo's son married Orsini's bitch las' night ?

LISA

Uh-uh, and they say that she's crazy over Filippo Strozzi's boy.

MARIA *(with a guffaw.)*

She kin have um now. When a jade gits married, she kin be as much of a whore as she likes.

LISA

Ain't ya got no respec' for ya betters ?

MARIA

Naw ! They ain't no different nor me. If I had money, I could play tha lady as good as they.

LISA

Ya couldn't neither.

MARIA

Why not ?

LISA *(vaguely.)*

I seen a noble lady go down tha street this morning, and she looked different to we.

MARIA *(emphatically.)*

Corse she looked different to us. But ya stick her at this worshin'-board fer a month, and she'll look no different nor us.

LISA *(screaming.)*

Ooooh, look at that thing in the river !

(A body, bloated and horrible, floats past. It is the color of green cheese. Its head, a throat slit from ear to ear, and one claw-like hand are seen.)

MARIA

There, there, dearie ! It's Carlo Berchielli !

(She pats her on the back.)

LISA *(weeping.)*

My Gord, it's awful !

MARIA *(stolidly.)*

Don't let a little thing like that git ya, dearie. I collects 'em, I does. I notches a stick each time one of 'em passes this way. That's tha seventh I've seen this month. It's tha way ter get rid o' enemies. Beween tha dagger and tha rack, no one ain't safe these days. Sometimes I knows who they is. After tha Piazzi' got caught, tha Arno ran with corpses fer a month, and I could hardly work here ter tha stink.

LISA *(weeping.)*

It's orful.

MARIA *(patting her on the shoulder.)*

There, there ! Don't be squeamish ! Men has ter hate as well as ter love, don' they? If ya stick around here long enough, ya gits used ter it. Sometimes they floats past three in a day. I seen as many as fifty in a week. It's fun when ya knows who they is.

LISA *(in an indignant tone of voice.)*

How can folks do such things ?

MARIA

I dunno, but ya gits used ter it. Didja hear of tha row at the Strozzi palace last night ?

LISA *(interested.)*

No, what was it ?

MARIA

Filippo Strozzi got in a fight over a dish that was brung him by tha major domo. And he slammed it over tha pore feller's head and most scalded him ter death. They say tha old bastard's yells could be heard most ta tha Bargello.

LISA

Florence is an awful place.

MARIA *(chuckling.)*

I calls it a right merry place.

(She gets up and goes to the water's edge. Kneeling down, she begins to scrub, singing as she scrubs.)

O Clarice was a merry jade
And she loved her Guido dearly ;
But her husband come and found her out,
And beat her most severely.

Flip-flip-flip ! Flop-flop-flop !
Pound tha wash until ya drop,
Or yore man'll kill ya nearly !

CURTAIN

ARISTOCRAT

CHARACTERS

GIUSTINI, Master-Torturer for de' Medici.
FIRST ASSISTANT TORTURER.
SECOND ASSISTANT TORTURER.
THIRD ASSISTANT TORTURER.
LORENZO DE' MEDICI, called the Magnificent.
UGO OGNISANTI, a Hireling.
COUNT PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.
COUNT BARTOLOMMEO SCALCHI.

(The torture-chamber of the de' Medici palace. This room, a forbidding place, is set far below the level of the street, so that the outcries of its victims may not be heard. It is lit by great flaring flambeaux, and at one end of the room is a forge with a huge bellows that is being pumped by an attendant who heats irons that are reddening on the live coals. Thumbscrews are hanging on the walls. In a corner, the gear of the boot is seen; in another, light willow wands are piled up, these to be used for the bastinado. Near them, is a large leather funnel and the linen bands of the water-cure. Attendants garbed in red tunics with the Medici balls embroidered in black upon them, stand grouped about a rack in the centre of the room, to which is bound Ugo Ognisanti. Although he is not being tortured, he howls like a good one as the curtain rises.)

GIUSTINI *(laughing.)*

If he makes as much noise as that now, what will he do later ?

FIRST ASSISTANT

Body o' Christ, he's goin' ta be funny.

OGNISANTI

Mercy, for Christ's sake, mercy !

GIUSTINI *(slapping him on the chest.)*

There, there, me pretty, don't be skeered ! Nothin' ain't agoin' ta happen ta yer, at least not much.

(He gives a great guffaw.)

When Lorenzo's done with yer, there ain't agoin' ta be enough left of yer ta put in a reliquary.

FIRST ASSISTANT

That's right too. But why don't we begin ?

SECOND ASSISTANT

Lorenzo's conductin' this little affair hisself.

FIRST ASSISTANT

That's queer, 'cause he hates ta watch torture.

SECOND ASSISTANT

I know, but he's got a feller with him wot wants ta see this yere merry party.

(Footsteps are heard coming down a stone corridor, and an attendant who is stationed by a great door with iron grill-work in its centre, draws back a huge bolt, after looking through the grill, and opening the door, allows Lorenzo de' Medici, Pico della Mirandola, and Bartolommeo Scalchi to enter. All three are magnificently dressed.)

DE' MEDICI

Is all ready, Giustini ?

GIUSTINI

Yes, Sir.

(The attendant by the door closes it and draws the bolt. De' Medici and his companions approach the rack.)

OGNISANTI *(to de' Medici.)*

Mercy, Sir ! I beg of you, have mercy upon me.

DE' MEDICI *(drily.)*

What mercy would your dagger have had upon me, had I not been wearing a concealed shirt of mail ?

OGNISANTI

I was hired to do it by another.

SCALCHI *(contemptuously.)*

I hate a squealer. The man hasn't the courage of a rabbit.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I'd hate to be in his plight. It's hard to say what one would do under the circumstances.

SCALCHI

Why Pico ! I'm ashamed of you. No gentleman could allow physical pain to unbalance him to the extent of spilling a tale about an accomplice.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I'm not sure about that.

SCALCHI *(vehemently.)*

I'll wager a thousand ducats that no gentleman could do such a thing.

DE' MEDICI *(quietly.)*

I'll take you up on that, Bartolommeo.

(To Ognisanti.)

If you'll tell me who were the plotters behind your deed, I'll let you go free.

OGNISANTI *(eagerly.)*

The Pazzi hired me to do it.

DE' MEDICI *(sternly.)*

Is that the truth ?

OGNISANTI *(earnestly.)*

May God strike me dead, if it's not the truth !

DE' MEDICI

Begin, Giustini.

(The attendants stretch the ropes of the rack, by winding them about a huge windlass.)

OGNISANTI *(screaming.)*

Mercy, mercy, for God's sake, mercy !

(Scalchi looks on with evident pleasure, the sadism of his nature appearing in his countenance. De' Medici signals to the attendants to stop, and they release the tension of the ropes.)

SCALCHI

It amuses me to hear a lily-livered rascal yell. Why do you stop them, Lorenzo ? You brought us down here to see the fun.

DE' MEDICI *(to Ognisanti.)*

Who were the plotters in this attempt on my life ?

OGNISANTI

The de' Pazzi.

(As de' Medici turns to Giustini.)

Mercy, mercy, for Christ's sake mercy !

(De' Medici signals to the attendants, who give the ropes a violent twist.)

Stop, stop ! I'll tell, I'll tell !

(De' Medici signals to the attendants to stop, which they do.)

DE' MEDICI *(to Ognisanti sternly.)*

I'll give you a last chance to tell the truth. If you lie to me this time, I'll have your eyes seared out with a white hot iron.

(He nods to the attendant at the bellows, who takes an iron from the coals, and bringing it over to the victim on the rack, shows it to him, and then goes back and replaces it on the fire.)

OGNISANTI

I'll tell all. Roberto and Bartolommeo Scalchi had me hired to kill you. That's the truth, so help me God !

SCALCHI *(furiously.)*

It's a lie, a damned spiteful lie !

DE' MEDICI *(quietly.)*

There is always a way of finding out the truth, Bartolommeo, and, moreover, it's an admirable way of testing a wager.

(To the attendants.)

Untie the wretch.

(They free Ognisanti from the rack, and he falls to the floor and lies face downwards.)

Giustini, put Count Scalchi, in his place.

SCALCHI *(wildly.)*

You cannot treat a guest in such a manner.

(He draws his sword, but the attendants overpower him and in spite of his struggles, bind him to the rack.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(aside to de' Medici.)*

Really, Lorenzo, you can't do such a thing, it's breaking all the rules of hospitality.

DE' MEDICI *(quietly.)*

If the situation were reversed, Pico, would the result be different ?

(He signals to the attendants who stretch the ropes of the rack and then release them. To Scalchi.)

Well, Bartolommeo, and what have you to say ?

SCALCHI *(fiercely.)*

Nothing, damn you !

(Ognisanti who has been shivering on the floor, rises to his feet with difficulty, and hobbling over to de' Medici, flings himself on his knees before him.)

OGNISANTI

Spare him, Sir, spare him !

DE' MEDICI *(to Scalchi ironically.)*

It seems that a lily-livered wretch has more charity than a certain lordly gentleman who requested that I conduct him to the torture-chamber to pleasure him .

(He signals to the attendants who give the ropes a terrific twist. Scalchi groans.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

For Christ's sweet sake, stop it, Lorenzo !

DE' MEDICI *(to Scalchi.)*

Was your brother in the plot ?

(Scalchi remains silent, and at a signal from de' Medici, the attendants twist the ropes with all their might.)

SCALCHI *(losing his composure.)*

Christ burn you in Hell, make them stop, I can't stand it !

(He screams horribly, and at a signal from de' Medici, the attendants stop winding the ropes.)

DE' MEDICI

Will you speak now ?

SCALCHI *(whimpering like a beaten cur.)*

My brother and I hired Ognisanti to kill you.

(He howls like a dog.)

DE' MEDICI

Pico, it looks as though I had won my wager.

CURTAIN

GIROLAMO

CHARACTERS

MICHELE SAVONAROLA, of the court of Borgo d'Este.

ELENA BONACOSSI SAVONAROLA, his Wife.

GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA, his Son.

LAODAMIA STROZZI, illegitimate Daughter of Roberto Strozzi.

EPISODE ONE

FERRARA, 1471

(The great hall in the house of Michele Savonarola, sumptuously furnished in the most costly style of the day. Elena Savonarola is seated before a cheerful fire in the great fireplace. She is knitting. A few seconds after the rise of the curtain, Michele Savonarola comes blustering in, in a great state of excitement. Elena looks at him intently for a second, and then continues knitting placidly. Michele flings himself into a great carven chair opposite his wife, and then bangs furiously on its arms. He sucks in and blows out his cheeks alternately. This eliciting no notice from his wife, he kicks savagely at a low stool in front of him. As his lady does not deign to notice him, he pulls out a dead rabbit from a hunting pouch at his side, and throwing it in the air, catches it.)

ELENA *(placidly.)*

Take it into the kitchen, Michele. It will do nicely for Girolamo's supper.

MICHELE *(furiously.)*

By the prehensile toes of the saintly Peter, I've come to talk of Girolamo, Madam !

ELENA

Has he offended you in any way ?

MICHELE *(mimicing her.)*

Has he offended me in any way? He's a fool, a dolt, a marplot, a zany, a natural, an idiot, an imbecile, a dunce, a witling, a dotterel, a driveler, a blockhead, a coot, a numbskull, a booby, a clodpate, a dullard, a scaramouch, a clown, a...

ELENA

Gracious me, the court does teach one a vocabulary, does it not ? He isn't all that he should be, but what boy is ! I had no idea that Girolamo has attained such distinction as you give him, Michele...

MICHELE *(jumping up and slamming back into his chair again.)*

How dare you make fun of me, Madam ? Girolamo is an ass. If you will calm yourself and listen to me a moment, I'll tell you what's happened. You know how his grandfather and I have set our hearts on his following the career of a physician. Well, to-day our most gracious prince was pleased to favor our son with an audience... Our son ? Your son he may be, but I've never had anything to do with the fathering of such an oaf !

(He jumps up from the chair.)

ELENA *(quietly.)*

Sit down, Michele, and tell me all about it. What happened ?

MICHELE *(stamping up and down furiously.)*

What happened ? The good prince was pleased to give Girolamo an audience, and the lad behaved like a great booby. His tunic and doublet were awry, his hose ; half-gartered, and his sword was sheathless. Staggering up to the prince, he ducked a ridiculous bow that was unworthy of an ostler, and stammered that he hoped that His Highness was in good health, and...

ELENA

I think it was very polite of him, Michele...

MICHELE

Polite of him? By the widsom teeth of the Holy Evangelists, the boy should not have uttered a word ! And he, the son of the finest courtier in Ferrara, mortified me most to death. But there is worse to come. His Gracious Highness over-looking the behavior of the hobbledehoy, and after a conversation with my learned father, informed the dolt that he was pleased to send him to Bologna to learn to be a physician. And then to my utter confusion, the great booby stuttered out that he didn't wish to go to Bologna, and on being asked why, the mouthagape muttered that he was in love with the bastard daughter of the Strozzi, and that he wanted to remain in Ferrara and make the wench his wife.

ELENA *(fondly.)*

The dear boy has a tender heart !

MICHELE

Tender heart ! Before I've finished with him, he'll have something a lot more tender than his heart. The bastard daughter of Roberto Strozzi, and the prince willing to pay for all of his expenses at the university ! By the blessed Dung of the Holy Ass that carried Mary to Egypt, he'll answer for his tender heart, he will !

(He grabs a hunting whip from the mantel.)

I'm going to give the fool a first lesson in taking medicine, and when I'm finished with him, Madam, he'll dance all the way to Bologna and back again.

ELENA

Was the prince angry, Michele ?

MICHELE *(furiously.)*

Not in the least. When Girolamo left, he laughed himself wheezy.

(More furiously.)

And he who laughs at my son, laughs at me, and nobody laughs at me except to his cost. Where's Girolamo ?

ELENA *(quietly.)*

Where he always is, in the garden of the Strozzi villa.

MICHELE *(raging.)*

By the Holy Rooster that crowed at Saint Peter, he'll answer to me for this !

(He rushes out with great bluster.)

ELENA *(laughing.)*

He'll cool off before he reaches the first tavern, and by the time that he's through with that, he'll have forgotten all about it. Michele may be the most successful courtier in Ferrara, but he can't fool me.

CURTAIN

EPISODE TWO

FERRARA, 1474

(The garden of the Strozzi villa near Ferrara. At the left is a tall stone wall above which tower great cypresses. On the right is also a border of cypresses. An avenue leads to a grotto-fountain with cypresses behind it, the whole effect being a blind alley of cypress trees. As the curtain rises, Savonarola is standing in the path. He is about twenty years of age and is wearing a black tunic, hose, doublet, and shoes. He is slovenly in appearance, and bareheaded with a great shock of coarse, bristling, unkempt, black hair. He is of middle height, of dark complexion, and excessively high strung. His dark grey eyes flash beneath beetling black brows. His lips are thick and sensual. He has a low, receding forehead and a chin that is neither strong nor weak. The outstanding feature of his face, however is the huge, long, hawk-beaked nose that dominates his entire countenance and renders his profile both

grotesque and interesting. He is a man of tremendous emotional power, of sanguineo-bilious temperament, hot-headed, uncompromising, and neurotic. At this moment he is laboring under some emotional stress, for he sighs frequently, and mutters to himself incoherently, and flings his arms about in a violent and exaggerated manner. In the midst of his confusion Laodamia Strozzi enters, and rushes up to him. She is dressed sumptuously.)

LAODAMIA

What's the matter, Girolamo ?

SAVONAROLA

'Mia, there is much to torment me.

LAODAMIA

What's happened ?

SAVONAROLA *(lugubriously.)*

Everything ! I'm lost ! You're lost ! The world's lost. All is lost.

LAODAMIA

You haven't kissed me.

SAVONAROLA

There are far more important things than kisses in this world.

(He makes a huge, vehement gesture of a hobbledehoy. Laodamia attempts to take his hands, to have hers rudely thrust aside.)

LAODAMIA *(hurt.)*

Girolamo !

SAVONAROLA

This is no time for frivolling. Listen to me.

(He leads her to a stone bench against a wall, and she sits down while he remains standing in front of her.

I've just come from the pageant given by the Duke Ercole to his bride Eleonora. How does it happen that you were not there ?

LAODAMIA

I was closeted with my father, as we had many things to discuss.

SAVONAROLA

You didn't miss anything. Half the town was drunk, for wine flowed like water, and the other half was mad with love-making, for the public wenches were present, and they reaped a harvest. Great God, as though there were not serious things to think of in this world ! Italy is becoming a pot-house or worse, and Ferrara has lost its soul .

LAODAMIA

You take things too seriously, Girolamo. Life is meant for joy.

SAVONAROLA *(agitated.)*

Joy of the soul, yes ; but not for joy of the body. 'Mia, the big things of life are to be found in abnegation.

LAODAMIA

But material things can bring happiness too. Can you never understand that, Girolamo ?

SAVONAROLA *(vehemently.)*

Material things lead to perdition.

(He shudders.)

I am afraid of them.

(He sits down beside Laodamia and she takes his hand.)

LAODAMIA

When I touch you, I receive comfort.

SAVONAROLA

The moment I am conscious of physical contact with you, spiritual things fly away.

(He looks at her hand.)

These five small fingers seem like a claw, dragging me to Hell. They...

LAODAMIA *(snatching her hand away.)*

You are not very courtly, I must say.

SAVONAROLA

The court is for the courtesan. Moreover, one courtier in the family is sufficient. I am not for the courts of dukes, I am for the courts of God. Have you never felt how wonderful it must be to give one's self to God ?

LAODAMIA *(laughing.)*

My what a lover you are ! You have not even kissed me.

(She gives Savonarola a fleeting kiss, and then looks at him teasingly, her head to one side, birdwise.)

SAVONAROLA

Laodamia, sometimes I think you are not very serious.

LAODAMIA

Must one be serious at eighteen, Girolamo ?

SAVONAROLA *(sententiously.)*

One must always be about one's Father's business.

LAODAMIA

You talk like a tradesman. My father has no business.

SAVONAROLA *(superbly.)*

Every man has business of the soul which must be attended to.

LAODAMIA

Dear, dear, you are stuffy to-day! Youth is meant for joy and for freedom and for laughter and for pretty things.

SAVONAROLA *(grandiosely.)*

Such things are but the pomps and the lusts of the flesh.

LAODAMIA *(pettishly.)*

If you've come here to give me a sermon, pray save yourself the trouble, for I'll not stay. Anyhow, Vanna is going to dress me for the masque to-night. Aren't you glad that I'm the prettiest girl in Ferrara?

SAVONAROLA

I never thought of that.

LAODAMIA

Flatterer !

(She giggles.)

Well then, let's be serious. When are you going to Bologna?

SAVONAROLA *(startled.)*

Bologna ? How did you know that I was thinking of going to Bologna ?

LAODAMIA *(surprised.)*

Aren't you going there to learn to be a physician ? I thought that your heart was set on it.

SAVONAROLA *(relieved.)*

Oh that ! There are nobler things than ministering to sick bodies, Laodamia. The physician who ministers to the soul...

LAODAMIA *(pouting.)*

There you go with your old soul again. I do wish that you would forget your soul for a while. You're always talking of your soul.

(She jumps up suddenly and sits in his lap, and throwing her arms about his neck, kisses him violently.)

There now, what do you think of that ?

(Savonarola stiffens, shudders, relaxes, and then gives himself up to her kiss completely. Both exchange one long passionate kiss after another, becoming very excited. At the height

of his sexual emotion, Savonarola kisses Laodamia's hair, brow, eyes, mouth, throat, and breasts vehemently. He is as a man transformed, the dynamic power of his passion rendering him elemental. Laodamia follows him kiss for kiss and mood for mood, her body pressed close to his. Suddenly, when they are almost at a state of ecstatic transport, he flings her from him roughly, and jumping up from the bench, strides furiously up and down the pathway.)

SAVONAROLA *(shouting.)*

Jezebel !

LAODAMIA

Girolamo !

SAVONAROLA

Fiend ! Witch ! Whore !

LAODAMIA *(outraged.)*

Oooooohh !

SAVONAROLA

Now I know. You are not for me. I can never marry you.

LAODAMIA *(springing up from the bench and raging at him.)*

Fool ! Booby ! Who ever thought of marrying you ! Do you think that a Strozzi would stoop to a Savonarola ? Clown !

SAVONAROLA *(aside.)*

O God, help Thou me to tame this unruly body of mine !

(Aloud.)

Laodamia !

LAODAMIA *(raging.)*

Don't speak to me !

(She sits down on the bench and bursts into tears.)

SAVONAROLA *(looking at her sadly.)*

Love is not for me, Laodamia, I must go to God.

LAODAMIA *(sobbing.)*

You can go to God or the Devil, for all I care !

SAVONAROLA *(shocked.)*

Ladoamia ! Such words upon your lips ? Pray that you may be forgiven.

LADOAMIA *(furiously.)*

Fool ! Go away ! Go to God or the Devil or where you will. I don't want any more of you. You're not a man, you're a thing !

(She jumps up from the bench and slaps him in the face.)

SAVONAROLA *(angrily.)*

You she-cat !

(He shakes her roughly and flings her to the ground.)

Retro me Sathanas ! I am for God ! *Retro me Sathanas !*

(He rushes wildly down the path and disappears at the left, leaving Laodamia sobbing convulsively on the ground.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE THREE

BOLOGNA, 1474

(Savonarola's cell in the monastery of Saint-Dominic near Bologna. Savonarola is seated at a desk, before a great expanse of wall on which hangs a crucifix with a rosary wound about it. He has evidently been through some big emotional stress, for his face is much older than the face of a boy of twenty-two years of age should be. There is grim determination about him, as he sits with the rays of the setting sun falling on him from an unseen window, and casting a ruddy aura about him. On the desk are a few books, including works by Aquinas and

Aristotle, Dante's "Inferno", a Bible, and "The Love Sonnets of Petrarch". On the vellum binding of this last, is scrawled in big letters : "Retro me Sathanas." Savonarola is wearing the white habit but not the black outer garment of a Dominican Friar, since he is merely a novice.)

SAVONAROLA *(musing aloud.)*

Midnight offices ! Perpetual abstinence from meat ! Frequent disciplines ! Prolonged fasts ! Silence ! Poverty ! Existence by means of begging !

(His eye falls upon the crucifix.)

To live for Thee, Lord ! No work can be too humble, no endeavor too abject. With my decision has come that peace which transcends all human understanding. It tears my heart to have left my mother so, but had I made known my decision to my parents, my heart would have broken and I must have renounced my purpose. No longer can I watch Italy turning Hellward, eaten by intrigue, vitiated by politics, and ruled by madmen. I must have the quietude to work out undisturbed, some sure way to undermine such wickedness and folly. My forward body must be abashed by my determined soul. Laodamia ! Let me do penance for my sins. Let me be monastery drudge. I will be no fashionable friar, according to the custom of this frivolous era. I shall not change from an Aristotle of the world to an Aristotle of the cloister. I shall suffer that I may know. I'll pang that I may feel the urge of humanity. I'll master my rush of passion and turn it to the energy of charity. My mother ! I must write to her.

(He takes up writing materials.)

No, I must respect the head of my house, no matter how little he upholds such a title.

(He begins to write rapidly, repeating aloud what he is writing.)

Not being able to tolerate the gross corruption of the world any longer, and since vice is exalted and virtue is degraded throughout Italy, I have entered upon my novitiate in the monastery of Saint

Dominic in Bologna. This decision has not been formed in childish haste, but after prolonged meditation and suffering. I had not the courage to reveal my purpose beforehand, fearing that my heart would fail me at the moment of execution. To-day, the manners of Italy, are the manners of Sodom and Gomorrah. Not a single righteous man is left. It behooves us to learn of babes and of women of low estate ; for in these only, any shadow of innocence lingers. The good are oppressed and the people of Italy become like unto the Egyptians who held God's people in bondage. But already famine, flood, pestilence, and many other signs betoken future ills and herald the wrath of God.

Grieve not that some temporal lord has not girt me with his sword, and welcomed me among his followers. This you would have regarded as an honor to your house, and you would have rejoiced accordingly. Therefore, be all the happier that the Lord Jesus Christ has girt me with His sword and dubbed me His knight, and shed no tears of mourning.

Dearest Father, my sorrow is already so great, do not, I pray you, add to it by yours. Be strong, seek to comfort my mother, and join her in granting me your blessing. Girolamo.

(There is a long silence.)

Mother !

(Suddenly overcome by the pangs of nostalgia, and with nerves weakened by unaccustomed fasting, Savonarola falls forward to the desk, and with his head between his arms, sobs long and bitterly.)

CURTAIN

PART ONE

THE RISE

CHARACTERS

ALDO, a Guardsman.

BEPPO, another Guardsman.

GIUSEPPE, a carter.

GIOVANNI D'ARTE, a Resident of Padua.

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA, of the Order of Saint Dominic.

FIRST BEGGAR.

SECOND BEGGAR.

FIRST NOBLEMAN.

SECOND NOBLEMAN.

FIRST NOBLEWOMAN.

SECOND NOBLEWOMAN.

A WASHERWOMAN.

PORFIRIO, her Husband.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

COUNT PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.

PRESIDING OFFICER of the Dominican Order.

FIRST DOMINICAN FRIAR.

SECOND DOMINICAN FRIAR.

AN ATTENDANT.
FRA ANSELMO MORI.
FRA DOMENICO BUONVICINI.
ANGELO POLIZIANO.

EPISODE ONE

FLORENCE, 1481.

(A city gate which takes up the whole of the stage. It has three arches, a great central arch, and two smaller arches for foot-travellers. Between the first and second arch at the left, is a porter's lodge. Through the central arch, the foothills of the Apennines, a cypress-bordered road, and many villas are seen in the distance. A guardsman in peaked helmet and cuirass is sitting on a stone fast asleep. A few seconds after the rise of the curtain, a second guardsman enters. He is a great, jovial, red-faced fellow. Upon seeing the sleeping guardsman, he rushes up to him and shakes him violently by the shoulder.)

BEPPO

Wake up, ya fool ! If ya keep on a-snoozing thataway, it'll be snoozing fer you in tha Bargeller, and if Lorenzo hears of it, he'll fry ya liver fer his dorgs, he will.

ALDO *(waking up.)*

Hullo, Beppo, what's what ?

BEPPO

If ya keep on snoozing, Lorenzo'll git ya, that's what's what !

ALDO

Naw he wouldn't neither. He's a fine feller. T'other day he passed by here on his way ter Careggi, and he waved ter me just as friendly like, he did. Not many men in his persition would notice tha likes o'me.

BEPPO

Well don't ya be too sure that it would save ya from tha Bargeller. Better git on home and finish ya snooze in a safer place.

ALDO

Not much snoozing fer me to-day. Me darter Lucrezia's going ter be married. She's done well fer herself with Ercole Pozzi, tha miller's son.

BEPPO

Is Lucrezia tha pretty one ?

ALDO

That's her.

BEPPO *(jovially.)*

Don't let Lorenzo catch sight of her. He might ask fer his lordly rights.

ALDO *(indignantly.)*

He ain't got no lordly rights ! Sich things ain't did nowadays.

BEPPO

Gord strike me dead if they ain't ! My cousin's darter was strolling past the Orsini palace on her wedding day, and she waved ter tha young son of tha prince. And by tha blessed fingers o' Saint Thomas, he stopped tha wench and asked fer his lordly rights, an he got 'em too, by Gord ! And she ain't never went back ter her husband, and she's working in the palace this minute !

ALDO

You're a damned liar, Beppo !

BEPPO *(chuckling.)*

Take care! Lordly rights is lordly rights, and if I was a lord, I'd have plenty of 'em!

ALDO *(walking off at right.)*

Goo' bye, see ya this evening.

BEPPO

Goo' bye. Tell Lucrezia that if I was a lord, there'd be not much lef' of her.

(He sits down on a stone, as Aldo goes out at right. There is a clatter in the road, as Giuseppe enters, leading a team of white oxen with long curving horns. The oxen draw a huge cart that is heavily loaded.)

GIUSEPPE

Hello Beppo!

BEPPO

'Lo Giuseppe! Any noos from Pistoja?

GIUSEPPE

Orl quiet there. Anything noo in Florence?

BEPPO

There was a merry murder las' night.

GIUSEPPE *(interested.)*

Any one I knows?

BEPPO

Tha young Dook of Albanesi got in a brawl over some jade, and took a poke in tha guts wot sent him to his father, the Devil. And a good riddance says I... Watcha bringing in ter-day?

GIUSEPPE *(laughing.)*

A load o' clay.

BEPPO

A load o' clay? Gord's blood, ain't there enough clay in Florence, 'thout going ta Pistoja fer it?

GIUSEPPE

That's wot I say. This clay goes ter a feller called Andrea della Robbia. He's a artist or sump'n. He's got it in his head that tha clay from Pistoja's better nor tha clay from Florence. A fool idea, I says.

BEPPO

Well all artists is fools, if they wasn't fools, they wouldn't be artists.

GIUSEPPE

That's right too. I gits good pay fer bringing it here, and I don't give a damn wot I bring here, so long as I gits good pay. I says give me my pay and I'll cart any kine o'muck. Well, I'm on my way. Goo' bye.

(He pokes the oxen with his goad and lumbers off at right.)

BEPPO *(soliloquising.)*

Think o' carting clay from Pistoja, when they's just as good clay in Florence, as they is anywhere.

(Giovanni d'Arte passes through the central arch on horseback. He is superbly cloaked, and booted, and the trappings of his horse are of the best. He is about to ride by without stopping.)

Not so fast, young Sir, I don't know ya.

D'ARTE *(reining in his mount.)*

What do you wish ?

BEPPO

I wishes ta see ya passport. I has ter account for all wot goes through and all wot passes out o' this here gate.

(D'Arte fumbles in his cloak and extracts a passport which he gives to Beppo.)

D'ARTE

Here you are.

(Beppo takes the passport and opens it.)

BEPPO *(reading with difficulty.)*

Giovanni d'Arte, citizen of Padua.

(To d'Arte.)

What is ya business in Florence, young Sir ?

D'ARTE *(smiling.)*

I have come here to learn about life. From what I have been told, Florence must be a great city.

BEPPO *(proudly.)*

The greatest in tha world, young Sir.

(He gives the passport back to d'Arte who puts it in his cloak.)

D'ARTE

Do many people pass this way ?

BEPPO

Thousands ! I lets 'em in and I lets 'em out. Some goes in and never comes out, and some goes out and never comes in, and some never goes out or in again. Florence is a world in itself.

D'ARTE

I am come here to know about life.

BEPPO *(heartily.)*

Lord love ya young Sir, and there's a vast deal that ya will git ter know here ! Will ya stop at an inn ?

D'ARTE

Yes.

BEPPO

There's tha *White Bear* near tha cathedral, where tha wine's good. There's tha *Red Pigeon* hard by tha Trinity Bridge, where tha wenches is fair. There's tha *Golden Apple* near tha "Pallio"

goal posts in tha Square of Saint Mary's where the pasties is passing toothsome. And there's the *Falcon* on the Lung' Arno where the beds are as comfortable as the clouds of Paradise. And there's...

D'ARTE *(smiling.)*

Thank you.

(He hands Beppo a coin.)

Here's a sop for a wine, or a pastey, or a wench or a gaud.

BEPPO *(bowing profusely.)*

Lord love ya, young Sir. Thank ya kindly. May ya stay pleasure ya.

(Giovanni waves his hand and putting his spurs to his horse, gallops off at right.)

A fine figure of a gentleman, and he'll have a good time I'll warrant, or I misses me guess. There'll be new broke heads and new broke hearts in Florence, for his coming.

(Fra Girolamo Savonarola enters by the footway under the arch at left. He is dressed in the habit of a Dominican friar. His face is old and lined and belies his twenty-nine years, and his eyes are unutterably sad. He approaches Beppo.)

Good day, Father.

SAVONAROLA

Benedicite !

(He makes the sign of the cross and Beppo bares his head and then replaces the helmet.)

BEPPO

Ya passport, Father.

SAVONAROLA *(handing his passport to Beppo.)*

I am from Bologna and am on my way to the monastery of Saint Mark.

(Beppo glances at the passport and hands it back to Savonarola who puts it in his surcoat.)

BEPPO

Didja have a good journey, Father ?

SAVONAROLA *(his eyes lighting up.)*

Beautiful! All whom I met, were so kind. Your Tuscany is a sweet land and it seems to me that no other place in all the world could be so beautiful. Your mountains, streams, valleys, trees, birds, and sunshine made me feel that life is passing sweet.

BEPPO *(proudly.)*

I ain't never seen no other world nor this, Father, but I don't see how no other could be more beautiful. And Florence is a fine friendly city, and I hopes that ya stay will pleasure ya, Father.

SAVONAROLA *(solemnly.)*

God grant that it may, and may Florence be the better for my coming ! Friend, will you kindly direct me to Saint Mark's ?

BEPPO *(smiling.)*

That I will, and gladly, Father.

(He points.)

Ya see that great dome there? That's tha cathedral. Go down that street until ya gits there, and then walk down the Servi until ya gits ter tha horsepital. Turn ter tha lef' and go straight on until ya reaches Saint Mark's. God give ya good fortune, Father !

SAVONAROLA

Thank you, my friend. Pax vobiscum.

(He walks off at the right.)

BEPPO *(following him with his eyes.)*

A kindly friar, but how sad his face is !

CURTAIN

EPISODE TWO

FLORENCE, 1483.

(The portals and steps of the church of Saint Lawrence. Mass is over and two beggars hurry out, to seat themselves on the steps before the egress of the congregation.)

FIRST BEGGAR

By the holy rood, I thinks pickin's 'll be bad !

SECOND BEGGAR

Why ?

FIRST BEGGAR

'Cause o' tha damned noo Friar !

SECOND BEGGAR

Watcha mean ?

FIRST BEGGAR

He gits tha people so disgusted, that they ain't got no hope of Heaven lef' to give to beggars.

(He spits disgustedly.)

SECOND BEGGAR

That's right too.

(Savonarola passes through the portal on his way to the cloisters at the left.)

FIRST BEGGAR

Damn tha noo friar, says I.

(On hearing this, Savonarola pauses, then remains standing

in the shadows, unseen by those who pass out, but able to overhear anything that is said.)

There ain't no use in sticking around here, we won't git nothing.

SECOND BEGGAR

Let's be going.

(He scratches his head vigorously.)

Blast them lice ! I'll has to git rid o' some o' them.

FIRST BEGGAR

Some of them ?

SECOND BEGGAR

Sure, they says lice is healthy, cause they allus sticks ta a healthy person, so it's a sure sign that tha ain't nothing wrong with ya.

FIRST BEGGAR *(laughing.)*

Then One-Eye-Hugo's tha healthiest person in Florence, for he's got more nor you nor me put together.

(To some people as they pass out.)

Alms, fer tha love o' Christ, alms !

(They go by without noticing the beggars.)

Ya see ! Let's be going !

(The beggars rise and go out at left, as two nobles come through the portal).

FIRST NOBLEMAN

What did you think of the sermon, Riccardo ?

SECOND NOBLEMAN

I thought that it was stuff, Caliari. Fancy any one trying to convert Florentines to virtue and faith in these days !

FIRST NOBLEMAN *(laughing.)*

The man's crazy !

SECOND NOBLEMAN

He's worse than that, he's childish.

(They saunter off at right as two young noblewomen come out of the church.)

FIRST NOBLEWOMAN

What did you think of the sermon, Maria?

SECOND NOBLEWOMAN

Ridiculous. Imagine a friar being foolish enough to expect a girl to confess all of her sins.

FIRST NOBLEWOMAN

Yes, imagine me going to a confessionnal and telling where I spend every Wednesday night !

(They laugh. Many people come out of the church and go off at right and at left.)

SECOND NOBLEWOMAN

And to talk about Noah's Ark ! That's all very well for miracle pageants. Really it's too bad of him ! Does he take us for fools ? And the way he spoke of Aristotle and Gemistos Pletho !

FIRST NOBLEWOMAN

And to dare to criticise Lorenzo in Lorenzo's own church !

SECOND NOBLEWOMAN

And to attack Lorenzo's carnival songs and the ribaldry in our streets during carnival time.

FIRST NOBLEWOMAN

And to call our artists ungodly. I've never heard the like of it in all my life !

(They go off at left, as a washerwoman and her husband come out of the church.)

WASHERWOMAN

Well Porfirio, didja ever hear tha likes o' that !

PORFIRIO

And tha way he give it ter tha gentry ! He won't last long, he won't last long, he won't tha ole bastard ! It's tha first time that I ever hears a friar scolding his betters.

WASHERWOMAN

Christ burn me, ter talk thataway of Lorenzo in Lorenzo's own church ! He's got guts, he has.

PORFIRIO

Yes, and that's were he'll take a poke if he keeps on talking thataway.

WASHERWOMAN

Ya would think it were a sin ter have a body. Most friars ain't as squeamish as all that. Tha other evening, I seen Lisa and a monk under a bush...

PORFIRIO

Shut up ya fool, somebody might hear ya ! Friars ain't any better nor nobody else, by Balaam's talking ass ! Come along.

(They go off at the right, as Lorenzo de' Medici and Pico della Mirandola pass through the portal. De' Medici is dressed in cloak, cap, tunic, doublet, hose, and shoes of grey shot with lavender. Della Mirandola's costume is lavender shot with grey. The Medici is thirty-five years of age, and at the height of his fame and the glory of his manhood. Although above average height, he is unprepossessing in appearance. He is broad of shoulder and solidly built, dark of complexion, and with compressed lips, a powerful jaw, and a badly broken nose.

DE' MEDICI

Pico, the man's a fool. Think of his daring to attack my carnival songs. I, who am considered the finest writer in Italy since Dante, should be above the mouthings of this preposterous friar.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

The man's a zealot, Lozenzo. Unlike you or me, he sees through a glass darkly.

DE' MEDICI

Be that as it may, it is tactless of him to attack me in my own church, and in very bad taste besides.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(laughing.)*

Well I must confess that I was immensely interested in what he had to say concerning Aristotle and Gemistos Pletho.

DE' MEDICI

That infuriated me more than anything else. Think of a second-rate friar daring to attack, and setting himself above the best philosophers of ancient and modern times. These men are the gods of our Academy.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

But you must remember that Savonarola is an ardent believer in the church and that he takes her dogmas seriously.

DE' MEDICI *(scoffing.)*

No one takes the church seriously these days, at least no one save a fool. Why the popes themselves use it merely to secure temporal advantages.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I know, but one has to admire the man's sincerity. Florence has grown cynical, and God knows that Italy is steeped in vice, greed, and intrigue. I for one, admire this friar's courage.

DE' MEDICI *(superbly.)*

Even courage has no weight with a de' Medici, and I'll brook no interference in this town. If that friar thinks of setting himself up to match wits with me, I'll humble him in the dust ! Let him

take the advice of his Master and render unto God the things that are God's, and unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's.

(He laughs and puts his arm about della Mirandola's shoulders.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Really, Lorenzo, you are taking the man too seriously.

DE' MEDICI

I had thought of doing him the honor of an argument at the Academy, but it might make him fancy himself. Sup with me to-night, Pico, and I'll show you the beautiful picture that Sandro has just painted for me.

(They go out at the right.)

SAVONAROLA *(from the shadows.)*

O Lord, my God, tell me what am I to do bring these people to the light ! I have failed so far. Show me the way, Lord, show me the way !

(He remains motionless a moment, his head bowed in silent prayer. There is a long pause, and suddenly he raises his head triumphantly.)

That is the way, Lord ! I'll go far from this seething city, and in some quiet retreat, and after long silence, meditation, and mortification, I'll scourge this poor body of mine with continued fasting, until I am become a living spiritual flame, to return and sear this city with the fire of Thy Holy Spirit. In the name of Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

CURTAIN

EPISODE THREE

REGGIO D'ÉMILIA, 1484

(The chapter room of the Benedictine monastery, wherein the Dominicans are holding a conclave through the courtesy of the Benedictine order. Only a small segment of the great semi-circle of seated friars is seen. The presiding officer is seated in a great chair before a high desk and faces the friars. Between this desk and the seated friars, Pico della Mirandola stands facing the presiding officer. He is attired in doublet, hose, tunic, and shoes of apple green brocade embroidered with gold. In his hand he holds a scarlet cap with a long yellow plume fastened to it by a clasp of tourmalines and yellow diamonds. Savonarola is seated directly behind him.)

PRESIDING OFFICER

Pico della Mirandola, it is presumptuous for a youth of your tender years to have dared to aspire to the hope of grasping the omne scibile, or to have dared to attempt to reconcile theology and philosophy. The fact that you know many languages and speak Greek and Latin as well as the vernacular ; the fact that you are proficient in sciences, can give you no such right.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Good father, there is no age limit to the quest of knowledge. Do not permit my youth, my grace, my ringlets, and above all, my easy ways to fool you. God has granted me grace and beauty.

(Savonarola smiles.)

But God has also granted me a mind with which to think. My nature is essentially receptive, unlike the natures of most of the

learned men of the day, and neither fame, nor flattery, nor self-conceit has succeded in spoiling me.

(He grins boyishly.)

I have had no intention of offending Holy Church, and where no offense is meant, none should be taken. I have listened to your long, dogmatic, and scholarly dispute, but I think that there are things in life are that more important than dogma—

PRESIDING OFFICER *(severely.)*

Have a care young man, have a care ! You are now treading on dangerous ground. There is nothing more important than dogma !

SAVONAROLA *(springing to his feet.)*

That is where you are wrong ! Motionless and silent, I have listened to the long discussions on dogma, not caring to take part in a mere scholastic dispute. But there is a thing far more important and far higher than dogma.

PRESIDING OFFICER *(curtly.)*

And what is that, Fra Girolamo ?

SAVONAROLA *(impressively.)*

Discipline ! And by discipline, I do not mean the mere discipline of the members of our order, but the discipline of all mankind, from the lowest menial to the one who holds the highest office within the gift of Holy Church.

(There is a murmur of shocked astonishment from all present save della Mirandola.)

I am sick at heart with what I see about me. Everywhere is dissention, rapine, murder, greed, cynicism, intrigue, dishonesty, and war. Italy is honeycombed with lust and avarice. There is an evergrowing disrespect for things spiritual. The things that count to-day are temporal things and the soul is being lost sight of. We urge dogma to cure the sick, the needy, and the oppressed. Our fair land is torn by strife, and we preach dogma. Our women

are losing faith and honor in their wild rush for the pomps of the flesh. No longer do our men strive to be worthy of the ideals of Our Blessed Lord.

(All present bow their heads and cross themselves.)

Florence flocks to hear the mouthings of one Fra Mariano de Gennazzano, who flatters the Florentines with musical voice, well chosen words and grand sentences. Christ, as he preaches him, becomes a matter of mere rhetoric, of mere oratory. Verbal elegancies and ornaments receive more attention than sound doctrines simply preached. Fra Mariano's popularity increases daily, because his words, phrases, and gestures are all studied. He declaims his lines from the Latin poets with much elegance, and he is lavish with his quotations from Plato and Aristotle. His sermons are copied from the orations of Ficino to the Platonic Academy and he frequently recounts laughable anecdotes, and uses every device to swell the number of his hearers. The city is running after polished niceties of form and is careless of Holy Writ ; preferring a preacher who follows Cicero, rather than one who follows the Bible, the Fathers, and the martyrs of the Faith !

The Pope battens on vice and the ill-gotten gains snatched through his power as Vicar of God. His nephews are his sons and his nieces are his daughters. Our priests are no better than our princes, and there is no health in us. The few swim in luxury, while the many fester and rot in their woe. We make wars to fill our purses, and eat, drink, and are merry while the multitude starves in the streets. There is no justice in the land. Our priests lead neither in learning nor in the setting of a good example. We burnish the outside of the cup and the platter, and the inside is full of extortion and excess. Woe ! Woe ! Woe ! Unless we mend our ways and have the fear of God within us the wrath of God will descend upon us. We see not, we hear not, we feel not. Each man is for himself, and hypocrisy is rampant. We are becoming cynical and our priests no longer dare to preach the way. No longer do we care for the truth and the light. The church is festering from within !

(With uplifted arms.)

I see the heavens opening before me and unless we repent and return to the Lord, calamities will fall upon our beloved church. Repent ! Repent ! Repent ! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand !

(Overwhelmed, he sinks back in his seat, and buries his face in his hands.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE FOUR

REGGIO D'EMILIA, 1484

(The facade of the monastery of Saint Peter. Pico della Mirandola is standing at the side of the great portal, as the friars come from the conclave. He is evidently waiting for someone. Two friars come out and saunter off to the left, engaged in earnest conversation.)

FIRST FRIAR

What is the world coming to, Fra Anselmo ? I never heard anything like it, in all my life !

SECOND FRIAR

If Fra Girolamo continues to talk that way, his career will be short, for his sayings cannot help but get to the ears of the Pope.

FIRST FRIAR

Did you hear what he said about the church ? I am surprised that the Prior permitted it.

SECOND FRIAR

Times are changing, Fra Olivo. When I was a young friar in the good old days, such things could not have happened. It is blas-

phemy to talk that way. What would we do without our princes ? They give lavishly to the church.

(They go off at left, leaving the stage empty save for della Mirandola standing at the right of the portal.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Stuffy old fools ! That Fra Girolamo is man. And didn't he give it to them ! How his eyes flashed ! I love the courage of him. He is quite another person when he speaks. I've liked him ever since I heard his Lenten sermons. He is a great man. Florence is rotten in its slimy mess of greed and intrigue, and he's the first person who has dared to say so.

(Savonarola passes through the portal, and stops on seeing della Mirandola.)

SAVONAROLA

Permit me to congratulate you on the manner in which you conducted yourself in a very difficult situation. Your poise was admirable for one so young in years.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(flushing with pleasure.)*

It's good of you to say so, Father. I have admired you greatly ever since I heard your sermons at Saint Lawrence's. I hope that you are coming back to us.

SAVONAROLA *(sadly.)*

Not for the present. The people of Florence cannot tolerate what I have to say to them .

DELLA MIRANDOLA

You must not be discouraged. We Florentines do not take kindly to criticism. If you'll forgive me for what must seem presumption in one so young as I, I'd like to say that you have my sympathy, and that I'll always be proud to serve you in any way that I possibly can.

SAVONAROLA *(touched.)*

Thank you, my son. I have a feeling that I am destined to be of

some moment to Florence and her people. If I return, I shall hope to find you among those who attend my discourses in the garden of the monastery. You seem to be very different from the other noble youth of the city.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(smiling.)*

Well, you see I am interested in other things beside having a good time. Although I like to game and to lance and to lute, I am also interested in intellectual things. This is partly due to my father and partly due to Lorenzo de' Medici who has taken me under his wing, so to speak. He is the most powerful man in Italy after the Pope and the Sforza.

SAVONAROLA *(grimly.)*

Much too powerful, alas! But I think that his years are numbered.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(startled.)*

Why he is in the prime of his manhood, and one of the strongest men that I know.

SAVONAROLA

Nevertheless, I have the feeling that he is not long for this world, a bare ten years perhaps.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(laughing.)*

I hope that your premonition is incorrect, for his sake. Are you going anywhere in particular, Father? Suppose we sup at an inn together.

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

You forget that a Dominican is under strict orders and that he must fast at all times. But I am not unappreciative of your thought.

(He lifts his hand, and as della Mirandola bares his head, he blesses him.)

God be with you. Fare you well!

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Fare you well, and may God be with you too, Father !

(They separate, one walking off at the right and the other at the left. For a few seconds the stage is empty.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE FIVE

FLORENCE, 1489

(A room in the Medici palace. Lorenzo de' Medici and Pico della Mirandola are seated in great tapestried chairs before a fire of huge logs in the enormous fireplace. De' Medici is in tunic, doublet, hose, and shoes of mauve satin, embroidered with silver, and della Mirandola is in canary yellow.)

DE' MEDICI

What's the matter Pico? You have been as glum as the misericordia all evening. Wasn't the repast to your liking ?

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Excellent, Lorenzo, but I'm out of sorts. Poliziano's a dreadful bore.

DE' MEDICI *(laughing.)*

That's jealousy.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(flaring up.)*

Nonsense ! I hope I'm above that sort of thing, Lorenzo. He's

years older than I, and moreover, our respective writings are not of a nature to conflict.

DE' MEDICI *(soothingly.)*

I was only teasing, Pico. All Florence knows that you are the most open-minded and generous fellow alive, when it comes to the work of others.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Well, Poliziano's a bore, just the same. His style is both ponderous and flowery, and, moreover, it's stuffy, besides.

DE' MEDICI *(teasingly.)*

Pico, I actually believe that you are angry because you lost at "pallio" yesterday. Never mind, you won the hearts of all the women in Florence.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(pettishly.)*

I can't help it if I'm graceful. Because God made my body beautiful, is that a reason for every wench in Florence to go wild over me ?

DE' MEDICI *(laughing.)*

You are hard to please this evening. What is the matter ?

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(sulkily.)*

I was bored this evening, Lorenzo.

DE' MEDICI *(laughing.)*

At least you are frank, Pico. Boredom is always the great tragedy for youth. I wonder how many people in Florence would have given their eyes to be in your place to-night, Pico ? Have you written any songs lately ?

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(sourly.)*

One, but it's no good. Why do you change the subject ?

DE' MEDICI

In the hopes of changing your mood. Sing your song for me, Pico.

(He claps his hands and an attendant enters.)

Bring the Count a lute, Alfredo.

ATTENDANT *(bowing.)*

Yes Sir.

(He withdraws and returns immediately with a lute which he places in the hands of della Mirandola.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Thank you.

(The attendant bows, and retires.)

Really Lorenzo, I don't feel like playing this evening.

(He tunes the instrument.)

DE' MEDICI

Please sing the new song, Pico, you know how I love your voice.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(singing.)*

Love me, lady, and I'll be
Just what you would have of me—
Your knight-errant, master, slave,
All-adoring to the grave—
Yours, throughout eternity.

Love me, Sweeting, for your charms
Were created for mine arms
To encircle, and your eyes—

(He flings the lute down.)

I can't sing to-night, Lorenzo.

DE' MEDICI *(impatiently.)*

What is the matter with you to-night, Pico ? By Our Lady, you are exceeding poor company !

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(dolefully.)*

I'm in trouble.

DE' MEDICI *(laughing.)*

What again ? Who is she ? Really, Pico, one cannot take your troubles seriously, for you are always in some difficulty or another.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

It's really bad this time, Lorenzo. I am in difficulties again with the church. The Pope is raising the very Devil over my nine hundred propositions, and has refused to accept my published apology and demands that I retract all of my statements.

DE' MEDICI *(gravely.)*

This is serious. And the worst part of it is that I cannot help you in the matter, for I am also a *persona non grata* with the Pope. However, there must be some ecclesiastic to whom you can turn in this matter, someone who is very powerful in church affairs.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

The only man who could really help me, is not here.

DE' MEDICI

And who may that be ?

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Fra Girolamo Savonarola !

DE' MEDICI *(coldly.)*

Nor is he likely to be here, for he's a great trouble-maker. There is no more dangerous man on earth than a zealot aroused.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I have always thought that you have misjudged the man, Lorenzo.

DE' MEDICI

Misjudged him ! By the Rood, the man had the audacity to censure me in my own church ! He said that my poems were a disgrace to right-thinking people, and he called my artists ungodly and my learning superficial.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Well, I should think that you of all men would admire such courage. Any way, he's the only one who can help me out of this mess, and I wish to God that he were here ! Why not recall him to Saint Mark's ? I like him.

DE' MEDICI *(drily.)*

Well, I don't. He has scoffed at all that I have done, I who have done more for Florence than even my father, or Cosimo Pater Patriae. I have been one of the vital influences in the resuscitation of learning. Yearly I spend sixty-five thousand ducats for books alone. Did you realize that on his return from his last voyage to the Orient, Lascaris brought back with him over two hundred Greek works, eighty of which were absolutely unknown before ? And Savonarola calls my learning superficial !

DELLA MIRANDOLA

But Lorenzo, is it fair of you to expect such a man to appreciate what is merely secular to him ?

DE' MEDICI

I like broad-mindedness even in a monk, Pico. Take for instance the matter of Latin. You know how the church reveres Latin. Have I not endowed the University of Pisa for the very purpose of Latin research ? And look at my lavish gifts to the Platonic Academy here, the only institution of its kind in the world. It has made the Greek tongue popular among savants. The stipends of Johannes Argyropoulos, Theodorus Gaza, and Demetrius Chalcondylas have all been paid out of my pocket, and as a matter of fact, I'm a poorer man than my father, on account of this. Do you think for a moment that I shall allow the work of a lifetime to be undone by a braying friar ?

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I do not see why there should be a conflict between you and Savonarola.

DE' MEDICI

There would not be if he could only differentiate between the things that are God's and the things that are Caesar's.

(He laughs.)

But Pico, have you ever seen a zealot bent on reform, who stopped at the things that were his business ? Not only have I added to learning by new discoveries, but I have created for learning. Have you not told me yourself, that my odes and sonnets are of finer quality than any similar verse since Petrarch's ? Moreover, have I not been generous in giving to Florence the work of other writers ? Through me, Florence has received Poliziano's translation of the "Iliad" into Latin, Landino's "Disputations" and Bisticci's "Lives of Illustrious Men", and other works, to say nothing of my own magnificent writings.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I know, Lorenzo.

(With boyish enthusiasm.)

You are the most wonderul man in all the world ! But Savonarola is the only one who can get me out of my present mess. Would it be impossible for you to have him come back, if he distinctly understood that he was not to interfere with your great work for Florence ?

DE' MEDICI

He hates art and he rails against my artists. In spite of all that he says, the world will thank me for Verrochio, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, da Vinci, Filippino Lippi, del Castagno, and Pollajuoli. And have I not given Florence a school for sculpture under Bertoldo? Did I not discover Lorenzo di Credi and Michelangelo ! And you

want me to ask the arch-enemy of all such endeavors to return to Florence ? Really Pico, you are asking too much.

(He rises from his chair, and going over to della Mirandola, places his hand affectionately on his shoulder.)

But after all, I am very fond of you. And if you think it is the only way out for you, why I'll send for this monk. But mind you at the first show of disrespect for me, I'll send him back faster than he came.

(As della Mirandola is about to speak.)

Don't thank me, I cannot have Pico della Mirandola heckled by any pope or potentate on earth !

CURTAIN

EPISODE SIX

FLORENCE, 1491

(The garden of the monastery of Saint Mark. On the lawn, near the famous rose-bush, is a lectern, on which a great Bible lies open. Many friars and lay brothers are passing to and fro, before Savonarola's discourse begins. The Prior enters and goes to the lectern, and Fra Anselmo immediately goes up to him.)

FRA ANSELMO

Worshipful Prior, it is indeed a joy to us that you have been elected to preside over our order.

SAVONAROLA

And I am happy too. But ever I bear in mind the fact that many worthier friars have held this position before me. It is a miracle of God that I, the once so-bitterly hated, am now hailed with joy

by the Florentines, and that vast multitudes throng the cathedral when I preach.

FRA ANSELMO *(smiling.)*

Many people are clamoring to hear your garden discourse to-day.

(Fra Domenico Buonvicini crosses the lawn and goes to Savonarola.)

BUONVICINI

Worshipful Prior, I have a mesage from the Magnificent for you.

(Fra Anselmo goes out at the right.)

SAVONAROLA

And what has he to say, Fra Domenico ?

BUONVICINI

He is expecting you at the palace, in order that you may pay your respects to him as the new prior of Saint Mark's.

SAVONAROLA *(sternly.)*

I pay no homage to the de' Medici, for I consider that my election is owed to God alone, and to Him alone will I vow obedience.

BUONVICINI

That is true, but is it not wise to conform to a time-old custom ? The de' Medici have always been generous patrons of Saint Mark's.

SAVONAROLA *(severely.)*

Can any man patronize a house that belongs to God ? I will not render homage to Lorenzo de' Medici, and, moreover, this will test his character which I believe to be bad to the very core.

BUONVICINI

As you will, but is not such an attitude unwise ? There are many people outside, who are clamoring to hear your discourse.

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

Bid all of them to come in. As a servant of God, I refuse no one who wishes to hear what I have to say.

BUONCIVINI *(to a passing lay brother.)*

Open the gates, and admit the people.

(The lay brother goes out at left.)

SAVONAROLA

I shall speak to all who wish to hear me.

(There is a hum of voices, and many people enter. Rich and poor swarm into the garden and seat themselves on the grass. Pico della Mirandola enters and goes to Savonarola. He wears a gorgeous riding costume of scarlet brocade and leather.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Congratulations ! At last Saint Mark's has a prior worthy of so great an institution. Your rise to popularity has been a great source of satisfaction to me. Much water has flowed beneath the bridges since our talk at Reggio.

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

I am happy to see you here ; for those who come to hear me are my children, and I am glad to count you among my sons.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

What is the subject of your garden discourse to-day ?

SAVONAROLA

My garden discourses are always given over to the exposition of the Bible. I love to talk within this peaceful close, to the twitter of birds and far away from the roar and rumble of the seething city.

(The people have seated themselves, and the members of the order stand grouped behind them.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I have not been to one of your discourses before.

SAVONAROLA

Find a place on the lawn, for I am about to begin.

(Della Mirandola seats himself on the grass with the others, and Savonarola, turning to the lectern, commences to speak.)

My children, I wish to speak to you to-day about the creation.

(He finds a particular place in the Bible, and commences to read.)

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said : 'Let there be light!' And there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good ; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Now my children, these beautiful words have more than a literal interpretation. They have a spiritual interpretation, which is : heaven is the soul, and the earth, body. The light is the intelligence acting, of course. And these words have an allegorical meaning. Heaven is Adam, and the earth, Eve. And the light is the light of grace. There is also an allegorical meaning with reference to the New Testament. Heaven represents the Hebrew people, and earth represents the Gentiles. And the light is Jesus Christ.

(All present bow their heads or genuflect.)

There is also a moral interpretation : heaven being the soul and earth, the body in the sense of reason and instinct. The light is the light of grace.

(He reads.)

"And God said : 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament : and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

The spiritual interpretation of this is that the firmament is the

will struggling between the body and the soul. With reference to the Old Testament, the firmament is Noah's Ark as a means to salvation. With reference to the New Testament, the allegorical interpretation is that the firmament is the apostles and other saints who have brought us out of darkness into light.

(He reads.)

"And God said : 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered unto one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. And God called the dry land earth ; and the gathering together of the waters called he seas : And God saw that it was good. And God said : 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb-yielding seed, and the fruittree yielding after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth.' And it was so. And the earth brought forth grass and the herb-yielding seed after his kind, and the tree-yielding fruit whose seed was in itself, after his kind : and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day."

The spiritual interpretation of the division of the waters from the earth, is the movement of the passions and of the errors possessing the intellect. The meaning of the grasses and the plants, is the intellect craving knowledge. In terms of Old Testament allegory, the division is the separation of the Gentiles from the Chosen People. The growing things are the elect. With reference to the New Testament, the allegorical meaning of the division is the separating of the many from the Church. The growing plants are the sound doctrines of the church. Interpreting this passage morally, we get the struggle of the passions against duty and reason that tend to beautify living.

(He reads.)

"And God said : 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night ; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. And God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day and over the

night, and to divide light from darkness : and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

Spiritually speaking, these lights are metaphysics, and ethics, and natural science, and logical science. With allegorical reference to the Old Testament, they are : the high priest, king, and other priests. With allegorical reference to the New Testament, they are : the pope, the emperors, and the doctors. Morally speaking, they are the laws of charity and minor precepts. Anagogically, they are : Christ, the Virgin, and the other blessed.

(He reads.)

"And God said :'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.' And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl, after his kind : and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying : 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the fowl multiply in the earth.' And the evening and the morning were the fifth day."

Spiritually this means the contemplation of higher and lower things, and morally it means the contemplation of things divine and things human. Our best thoughts rise to heaven, as birds rise on wings.

(He reads.)

"And God said : 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind.' And it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind : and God saw that it was good. And God said : 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them. And God blessed them and God said unto them : 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth,

and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.' And God said : 'Behold I have given you every herb-bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree-yielding seed ; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat.' And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Spiritually, the beasts are the fierce appetites, and man in the image of God, is man with an inner and an outer sense, and with the power to control his passions. With reference to Old Testament allegory, the creations of the sixth day are : the Hebrew people given over to avarice, that which is good, and the expected Messiah. With reference to New Testament allegory, these creations mean the Antichrist with his followers, the Christians given over to earthly things, and the chosen and the perfect who will abound in the time of Antichrist.

The moral interpretation of these creations refers to the wicked, the persecutors, and those who become perfect through tribulation. Interpreting anagogically, the creations of the sixth day are those who were persecutors, and the preachers who are here to save the world.

(He reads.)

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work, and he rested."

CURTAIN

EPISODE SEVEN

FLORENCE, 1491

(A room in the Medici palace. Before a huge fireplace in which great logs are roaring merrily, Lorenzo de' Medici, Angelo Poliziano, and Pico della Mirandola, are seated in immense chairs covered with velours. De' Medici is in royal purple shot with gold, della Mirandola wears a black costume shot with silver, and Poliziano is in orange shot with grey.)

POLIZIANO

You should have been there, Lorenzo. It was the most exciting evening that we have had for months.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

In spite of the fact that it has done wonders for Florence in particular, and for the world of savants in general, I can generally sleep throughout a meeting of the Academy.

DE' MEDICI

Pico, I sometimes wonder why I bother with you at all. You have the stupidest way of being bored by things that should interest you.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(laughing.)*

Pedants madden me. It seems too stupid for old men to take learning seriously. Take last night for instance, old Putti got in a row with Lupi over the respective merits of Plato and Aristotle. Why can't those old savants behave themselves, Lorenzo ? Both of those Greeks have their respective merits, and it seems to me that one ought to be satisfied to let it go at that. But not a bit of it. Lupi said that if there had not been a Plato, there never could have been an Aristotle. And that silly ass Putti retorted that, compared

with Aristotle, Plato was a babe in arms. They got madder and madder over the matter, until one of those senile grandfathers drew his dagger, and they had to be separated.

DE' MEDICI *(laughing.)*

It does seem rather absurd, doesn't it ?

POLIZIANO

But that's not the worst of it. Just when matters had quieted down and it seemed as though there would be a peaceful evening after all, Niccolo Gigli had to say that Gemistos Pletho was the greatest philosopher that the world has ever produced. Putti and Lupi went for Gigli and the row started all over again. Then Putti actually kicked Gigli in the backside and was suspended from the Academy for a month.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Do you wonder that I'm sick of the Academy ? Those three old fools are old enough to know better. It seems to me, Lorenzo, that we should use the wisdom of yesterday for the benefit of to-day.

DE' MEDICI

There are things that belong to the past that are not much use to-day, and yet great fun into which to delve. You haven't the true spirit of research, Pico.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Well I must confess that the things of to-day, are of greater interest than the problems of the stuffy old past. Speaking of to-day, how do you like the new Prior of Saint Mark's as time goes on ?

DE' MEDICI *(angrily.)*

You are always harping on that man ! It seems to me that he gets more and more impossible from day to day.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I like him more than ever. I've been attending his discourses

in the monastery garden, and I think that his intepretation of the Bible is more lucid and human than any I have ever listened to.

POLIZIANO

The most cultivated exponent of religion that I have heard in Florence is Fra Mariano. He is polished and wordly, and I, for one, admire culture even in a friar.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

He is a sycophant and always humble in the presence of those whom he considerers his betters. Savonarola's attitude of no compromise suits me admirably.

DE' MEDICI

That is because you are still a boy, Pico. Youth never compromises.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Well for that matter, Savonarola is no suckling babe, and he does not seem eager to compromise.

DE' MEDICI *(angrily.)*

Compromise ! Yesterday, from the pulpit of the cathedral, he condemned in the plainest language possible, that which he chose to regard as the scepticism and the corruption of our most celebrated writers, making particular mention of you, Angelo, and of me.

POLIZIANO

Surely Lorenzo, you do not think that I care what that braying ass says about me ?

DE' MEDICI *(seriously.)*

But he's beginning to get the people. His imagination seems to enchant the popular fancy, and his threats of coming chastisement begin to have a magical effect on all minds.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(shuddering.)*

He seems to have the power of prognostication.

DE' MEDICI

Why do you shudder, Pico ?

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I was thinking of something that he told me when we were at Reggio.

DE' MEDICI

Yesterday, his sermon was the most daring that he has yet essayed.

POLIZIANO

I wasn't there.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Nor I. What did he say ?

DE' MEDICI

He began with a violent attack upon the clergy, declaring that they were devoured by greed of gold and given up to the outer ceremonies of which they make a traffic, while neglecting the inner life of the spirit.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Well, that's the truth, isn't it ?

DE' MEDICI

I suppose so ; but there are some truths that are best left unsaid.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

I cannot agree with that, Lorenzo. It seems to me that the biggest thing in life is truth, no matter how terrible it may be. But go on with the matter of the sermon.

DE' MEDICI

He said that the poor are oppressed by grievous burdens and that they are called upon to pay taxes far beyond their means ; while the rich pay few taxes, since taxes are imposed at their own pleasure.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

You are a banker, Lorenzo, so you know more about the truth of that statement than I do.

POLIZIANO

It seems to me, that inasmuch as the rich do such wonderful things to embellish life, it is their right to impose whatever taxes they will. Having culture and taste, they are the natural custodians of expenditure.

DE' MEDICI

He then went on to speak of the corruption of manners, of the loss of respect for womanhood, of the general rottenness of society and then he had the audacity to say that the rich would be smitten with affliction and that Florence was a den of thieves, of turpitude and of bloodshed.

POLIZIANO

What a pleasant mind the Friar has, to be sure. Probably the wish is father to the thought.

DE' MEDICI

Exactly. His impudence is boundless. I invited him to preach a sermon before the Signory in this palace, and in accepting he said that he felt it was his bounden duty to do so, but that he realized that he would be in the waters of Tiberias, and that he would not feel the master of himself, as in church, and that he would have to be more measured and urbane, even as Christ in the house of the Pharisee.

POLIZIANO

I've never heard of such impudence in all my life !

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(laughing.)*

That is even doing well for Savonarola.

DE' MEDICI

In his sermon of yesterday, he hit at me too. He cannot plead

ignorance as an excuse, for he knew I was to be present. He said that tyrants are incorrigible because they are proud, and that they will not restore gains that are ill-gotten. And they leave everything in the hands of bad ministers, and succumb to flattery; they hearken not unto the poor, and expect the poor to work for them without reward. When he refused to come to pay his respects to me, as the new Prior of Saint Mark's, I decided to be a Christian and answer his rebuff with kindness. Therefore, I sent a handsome gift of money to the monastery. This he spent on the poor, and sent word to me that a good dog does not leave off barking in defense of his master, because a bone is thrown to him.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

You know Lorenzo, I just love that man for the rugged honesty he displays under all circumstances.

DE' MEDICI *(drily.)*

I wonder if you would like him so much if you were in my place, Pico ? I sent five citizens to him, threatening him with banishment unless he mended his manners, and his manner of preaching. What do you think he said to them ?

POLIZIANO

Something so outrageous, that it is a wonder that it did not blister him where he stood.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(laughing.)*

It would be more likely to blister the five.

DE' MEDICI

He told them that he was well aware of the fact that they had not come of their own free will, but because they had been sent. He suggested that they return to me and inform me that I must do penance for my sins, since the Lord is no respecter of persons and spares not the princes of this earth. When the five threatened to banish him, he told them that he was not afraid of banishment. Then he spoke in such a manner, as to show an absolutely amazing

knowledge of public affairs. What are you going to do with a man like that ?

POLIZIANO

Have him put out of the way. He is a menace.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Give him the highest position within your gift. He is a born leader.

DE' MEDICI

He is beginning to have an extraordinary effect upon the people and upon society in general. And he has effaced Fra Mariano Gennazzano completely.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(contemptuously.)*

That is not surprising. Fra Mariano is a hypocrite and his eloquence consists in gesticulating, groaning, and weeping.

DE' MEDICI

I have asked Fra Mariano to attack him, and he has accepted the suggestion.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(contemptuously.)*

That shows the man's spirit. He pretends to be Savonarola's friend and is always congratulating him upon his successes, and yet he jumps at a chance to attack him.

DE' MEDICI

He certainly accepted with great eagerness. If this does not work, I shall have to banish him.

POLIZIANO

You are forgetting something that's very important.

DE' MEDICI

What's that ?

POLIZIANO

That a Savonarola always hangs himself with his own rope. His attacks on the Church are bound to reach the ears of the Pope. The Borgia is no long-suffering person like yourself, and he'll have him out of the way immediately.

DE' MEDICI

True enough, but this will take time, and do I have to stand the man around until then ?

DELLA MIRANDOLA

After all, Lorenzo, he hasn't interfered with you in any way.

DE' MEDICI *(laughing shortly.)*

I should hope not ! If he really interfered with me, he would not be long for this world. I hope that I am man enough to get rid of any serious rival.

(Grimly.)

The de' Pazzi found that out to their cost ! If my little plan for Fra Mariano to undermine him does not work, I'll find some other means to cut his claws !

CURTAIN

EPISODE EIGHT

FLORENCE, 1492

(A bedchamber in the Medici palace. All that is visible is a great four-poster bed with a magnificent canopy over it, and a part of a wall covered with a fresco. Lorenzo de' Medici is sitting in bed, propped up with pillows. He wears a loose gown of sky blue embroidered with silver. Although somewhat haggard, his appearance belies the fact that his hours are num-

bered. Pico della Mirandola is standing at his bedside, as the curtain rises.)

DE' MEDICI *(smiling.)*

Well Pico, your old friend is not long for this world now.

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(his voice choked with emotion.)*

Don't say that, dear Lorenzo, the physicians...

DE' MEDICI *(testily.)*

The physicians are a pack of idiots. Here am I at the point of death, and all the physicians can think of is to powder a spider, a sapphire, and a pearl, and make a draught of them. Then they let a little more blood. Between you and me, Pico, I have a feeling that this blood-letting is the silliest thing on earth. Each time that I have lost blood, I feel a wave of weakness sweep over me that almost blinds me. Blood, like sap, is the ichor of strength. Away with physicians, say I !

DELLA MIRANDOLA

But surely, Lorenzo, you are over-estimating the gravity of your indisposition.

DE' MEDICI

I am not long for this world now. I lie here and think of the past, of old joys and old sorrows. My life has been one of extraordinary satisfaction and achievement, and I have accomplished much for a man of forty-three.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Poliziano was saying that just now.

DE' MEDICI

Is he here ?

(Della Mirandola nods.)

Well, let him wait, for I wish to talk to you. Sit down here by my side.

(Della Mirandola sits on the bed and takes Lorenzo's hand in his.)

I've been fonder of you than of any other person about me. You have a fresher, a more buoyant, and a more far-seeing mind than the others. Your sense of justice is finer too. I have been wrong about many things, but Florence is going to miss me.

(Bitterly.)

My foolish Piero will never be able to guide the State. I wish to God that you were my son ! You would be as great, or perhaps even greater than I. I have made many mistakes, and as death approaches, I am afraid, bitterly afraid. What if this mumbo-jumbo of the priests should be true after all, so that one does face eternity with the burden of one's sins upon one ? I lost all faith in God and in man after the death of Giuliano. No one can ever realize what he meant to me. Had he lived, I might have done many things differently. My mind is haunted by spectres of the past, and I have no faith, whatsoever, in my confessor to grant me absolution. Remorse is gnawing at my vitals. Take that matter of Volterra for instance. The cries of the innocent who died there ring in my ears both day and night. I have been proud, and many of the things that I have done for Florence, were done merely for my own satisfaction. In my heart of hearts, I know my greatly vaunted learning to be superficial.

DELLA MIRANDOLA

You are morbid, Lorenzo. Your's has been the greatest influence for art and learning that this city has ever had.

DE' MEDICI

I know, but I'm beginning to think, as I stand on the threshold of death's door, that the most important things after all, are the things of the spirit. I must have absolution, for it is possible that there is an after-life. If that which the priests tell us be true, it is wise for me to make my peace with God. I have no faith in my confessor, Fra Mariano. Ever since his attempt to undermine Savonarola failed...

(Struck with a sudden thought.)

Savonarola ! There's the very man ! I know of no honest

friar, save this one. He has always been equally unmoved by my threats and blandishments. He must confess me. He alone can grant me an absolution that will have any weight with God. Pico, send a messenger to Saint Mark's instantly, and acquaint Savonarola with my will.

(Della Mirandola jumps up from the bed and goes out at the right.)

I must make my peace with God, and absolution from this honest friar is the only way.

(Della Mirandola returns, and stands by the side of the bed.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Savonarola has been sent for, Lorenzo.

DE' MEDICI *(relieved.)*

That's good ! You have been a sweet friend, Pico, and your gentle kindly ways are most soothing in these, my last hours. I should indeed be sorry to die without being cheered a little by your presence first. We have had some fun together. Do you remember your escapade on the way to Fiesole, the day you first came to see me there ?

(He laughs and della Mirandola bends his head to hide a quick rush of tears.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA *(speaking with difficulty.)*

And that joyous night at the Academy, when Putti split his hose, waxing over-enthusiastic, while reading "The Frogs" of Aristophanes ?

(De' Medici laughs feebly.)

DE' MEDICI

We have been great friends, Pico, and you have been by far the most understanding person of them all.

(Suddenly overcome by emotion, della Mirandola rushes from the room, to return almost immediately with Savonarola.)

DELLA MIRANDOLA

Here is Fra Girolamo, Lorenzo.

DE' MEDICI *(in a bantering tone of voice.)*

You are welcome. At last the guest comes to pay his respects as the host is leaving the house.

SAVONAROLA *(solemnly.)*

I am here to confess you.

(Della Mirandola goes out at the right.)

DE' MEDICI

I have three sins on my conscience that trouble me, and I do not wish to depart this life without absolution for them.

SAVONAROLA

What are they ?

(He stands at the bedside, looking at de' Medici searchingly as though to fathom all his thoughts.)

DE' MEDICI *(in great agitation.)*

First, there is the sack of Volterra—O God, when I see that burning town and hear the cries of the helpless women and children!...

SAVONAROLA *(gently.)*

My son, God is merciful.

DE' MEDICI *(in a whisper.)*

There is an offense that leaves me weak from shame, whenever I think of it.

SAVONAROLA

What is it ?

DE' MEDICI

The misappropriation to my own use, of funds that belonged to the General Insurance, and were for the purpose of providing dowers for the daughters of those parents who subscribed to the company.

SAVONAROLA *(gravely.)*

That is a grievous sin, my son.

DE' MEDICI *(sighing.)*

It weighs heavily on my heart, Father. It is the one thing that comes between me and my soul's acceptance of the word "Magnificent," of which I have been so justly proud, otherwise.

SAVONAROLA

Are you prepared to restore these funds ?

DE' MEDICI *(astonished.)*

Well, I hardly expected to do that. It will be no easy matter for me to ascertain the amount, and my hours are numbered. Besides, it was so many years ago. Surely there is some other way for me to obtain absolution ?

SAVONAROLA *(sternly.)*

There are three things needful, in order that you may obtain absolution.

DE' MEDICI

What are they, Father ?

SAVONAROLA *(still more sternly.)*

First, a great and living faith in God's mercy.

DE' MEDICI *(frightened.)*

I have the fullest faith in it.

SAVONAROLA

Secondly, you must restore all your ill-gotten gains, or at least charge your heirs to do it in your name.

(Speechless, de' Medici nods his head in assent, and cowers in fear. Suddenly Savonarola seems to assume immense proportions, and stands with uplifted hand, his voice sounding like a clarion-call.)

Lastly, you must restore liberty to the people of Florence !

DE' MEDICI *(gasping.)*

Wha-at ?

SAVONAROLA *(in a voice of thunder.)*

You must restore liberty to the people of Florence !

DE' MEDICI *(shouting angrily.)*

Never !

(With all his remaining strength, he flings himself down in the bed, turning his back on Savonarola who goes out slowly at the left.)

CURTAIN

PART TWO

THE TRIUMPH

CHARACTERS

LUCA CORSINI, of the Council of Seventy.
TENAI DE' NERLI, of the Council of Seventy.
JACOPO DE' NERLI, of the Council of Seventy.
PIERO DI GINO CAPPONI, of the Council of Seventy.
A GUARDSMAN.
A WOMAN.
A CARTER.
A TINKER.
A PROSTITUTE.
A STREET ARAB.
A TIPPLER.
FIRST HARRIDAN.
SECOND HARRIDAN.
A WASHERWOMAN.
A FRIAR.
FRANCESCO GADDI, of the Syndic.
DOMENICO GIOTTO, of the Syndic.
CHARLES THE EIGHTH, King of France.
THE CARDINAL of Saint Malo.

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA, Prior of Saint Mark's.
BEPPO, a Guardsman.
A GIRL.
A CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.
A FRANCISCAN FRIAR.
A VENDOR.
A CAVALRY OFFICER.
A DOMINICAN FRIAR.
PIERO DE' MEDICI.
CARDINAL BATTESE, of the Vatican.
ENRICO TURLI, an Agent of the Sforza.
A WATER CARRIER.
A HOUSEWIFE.
COUNT GASTONE PARIRI, of the Bianchi.
COUNT ALESSANDRO GIOVI, of the Bigi.
COUNT GIONATA MASCHE, of the Arrabbiati.
PHILIPPO CORIBIZZI, Grand Gonfalonier of Florence.
MARSILIO FICINO, of the Platonic Academy.
FRA DOMENICO PONZO.
FIRST FRANCISCAN FRIAR.
SECOND FRANCISCAN FRIAR.
FRA TOMMASO DI RIETI.
A CARTHUSIAN FRIAR.
A VENDOR.
A CARTER.
RODRIGO BORGIA, POPE ALEXANDER VI.
GIULA, MARCHIONESS OF CORRI.
AN ATTENDANT.
VITTORIA, COUNTESS BALDI.
CLARICE, COUNTESS VITELLI, her Friend.

FRA DOMENICO BUONVICINI.
A LAY BROTHER.
A PAPAL MESSENGER.
FIRST BEGGAR.
SECOND BEGGAR.
FIRST NOBLEWOMAN.
SECOND NOBLEWOMAN.
FIRST NOBLEMAN.
SECOND NOBLEMAN.
A WASHERWOMAN.
UGO, her Husband.
A PIAGNONE.
FIRST ARRABBIATO.
SECOND ARRABBIATO.
FIRST VENDOR.
SECOND VENDOR.
A BIGIO.
THIRD ARRABBIATO.
FOURTH ARRABBIATO.
A WENCH.
A GUARDSMAN.
A CAPTAIN OF GUARDSMAN.
SECOND PIAGNONE.
FIRST ART STUDENT.
SECOND ART STUDENT.
A COMPAGNACCIO.
A FRANCISCAN FRIAR.
SECOND BIGIO.
THIRD PIAGNONE.
A CARTER.

Rabble, Nobles, Friars, Guardsmen, Members of the Syndic, Soldiers, Vendors, Street Arabs, Peasants, Friars, Carters, Washerwoman, Beggars, Members of the Piagnoni, Members of the Bigi, Members of the Arrabbiati, Members of the Compagnacci, Members of the Signory, Children, Burgeois, etc.

EPISODE ONE

FLORENCE, 1494.

(A council chamber in the Palace of the Signory. This room is very large, with a high ceiling and gilded rafters. On the walls are frescoes of the heavens with the signs of the Zodiac. All that is seen, is the part of one wall, together with carven chairs upholstered in red Genoa velvet. In these are seated the Members of the Council of Seventy, arrayed in their magnificent orange velvet and ermine robes of office. A few seconds after the rise of the curtain, Luca Corsini rises to his feet.)

CORSINI

Gentlemen, you will forgive me, if I break all rules by rising and speaking uninvited. Things are going from bad to worse, and the city is falling into a state of anarchy. Some strong remedy is needed. A remedy which —

(There is a murmur of annoyance among the members who are present, and some begin to cough significantly.)

It seems to me that the entire State of Tuscany—

(The murmur becomes more pointed, and after a few moments of hesitation, Corsini takes his seat.)

DE' NERLI THE YOUNGER *(springing to his feet.)*

Gentleman, Messer Corsini is correct in his estimate of the situation—

(There is a roar of disapproval, and de' Nerli, turning scarlet, hesitates and resumes his seat.)

DE' NERLI THE ELDER *(rising.)*

Gentlemen, you must excuse the manners of my son. Tenai is both young and foolish.

(He sits down, as Piero di Capponi rises to his feet. He is a man of great determination. His finely proportioned form and air of buoyant courage attract the attention of the members of the council. He has a great shock of snow white hair, and his demeanor is that of an old war horse listening to a clarion call.)

CAPPONI

Gentlemen, as both Corsini and de' Nerli have said, this situation needs immediate and careful attention. Matters are so serious, that it may be well to review once more the past events that have called us here in debate to-day. One source of our troubles, has been the Borgian Pontiff whose devouring ambition to create principalities for his children, has exposed all of Italy, and as a matter of fact, the whole of Europe to any catastrophe, that his end might be gained.

Another source of our troubles has been Ludovico Sforza, self-styled craftiest man in Italy, whose duplicity and bad faith are so notorious, that all treaties concluded by him have been violated at the first opportunity. He holds the Duchy of Milan by usurpation. The union of Naples, Milan and Florence by the treaty of 1480, was due to the diplomatic ability of our late and very much lamented Lorenzo. Unfortunately, his untimely death and the loss of his influence have made the Moor cast off all restraint. To gain his own ends, he invited the French to undertake the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples. The French king is a mere stripling of twenty-two, and he is filled with a passion for adventure.

He is illiterate, without prudence of judgment, and surrounds himself with men of low origin. Yet he would emulate the deeds of the illustrious Saint Louis of France.

The French have spread ruin and disaster wherever they have passed; Piero has favored them, and has kept from striking a definite blow, and he had them bottled up in the fastness of the hills too. Although the People's Party favored the French at first, their opinion has changed completely, due to the fact that Piero de' Medici sued for peace without striking one blow for freedom. We have always been loyal to the de' Medici, but now, our duty as citizens of Tuscany forbids us to remain so. The prophecies of Savonarola have come true, and we are face to face with the fact that de' Medici is no longer fit to rule the State. The Republic must provide for itself, and the time has come to cast off this baby government!

(All present signify their assent by a great roar of approval.)

Let ambassadors be sent to King Charles and let them explain Piero's attitude in the matter and tell him that the city is well disposed toward the French. Let honorable men be chosen to give a fitting welcome to the King; but at the same time, let all the captains and soldiery be summoned from the country and be hidden away in cloisters and in other secret places. Let all men be prepared to fight in case of need, so that when we shall have done our best to act honestly and to satisfy the avarice of the French with money, we may be ready to face the king, and to show our teeth, if he should try us either by word or by deed. And above all, it must not be forgotten to send Fra Girolamo Savonarola as one of the ambassadors, for he has gained the entire love of the people, and he has gained the entire respect of Charles the Eighth, who holds him in veneration, because of his having foretold his coming, and declaring it to be ordained by the Lord.

(Capponi sits down amid thunders of applause.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE TWO

FLORENCE, 1494

(Before the portal of the de' Medici palace. A great throng is grouped before the doors, either taking part in, or watching the looting of the palace. In the distance the sounds of fighting and the clashing of steel are heard, together with the cries and screams of the people. After the rise of the curtain, a guardsman enters. Covered with blood and drunk with the fray, he rushes toward the crowd, waving his pike.)

GUARDSMAN

Down with the balls !

A WOMAN

What's happened ?

GUARDSMAN

Enough and a plenty. Nerli shut the door of the Signory Palace in Piero's face, and the people, taking courage, drove him away with cries, wagging the tips of their hoods at him. The urchins hissed him and threw stones at him. Dell' Aquila was taken with his men, and forced to release all the prisoners in the Bargello. Old Valori harangued the people, and they, obtaining all the weapons that they needed, kicked Piero and his followers through the San Gallo gate, and they are now on their way to Bologna or Hell by this time.

MANY VOICES

Down with the balls ! Long live the Republic !

GUARDSMAN

And it's Savonarola who did it all. We can thank the Friar for this day. What are the people doing here ?

A CARTER

They's helpin' theirselves to tha Medici palace, they is.

A TINKER

And a damned good thing too. Look what I got.

(He shows the guardsman a huge beryl on a fine golden chain.)

That'll look nice between the titties of my Bice. She ain't ever had nawthin' like that in her life before.

A PROSTITUTE *(laughing.)*

That she ain't ; but gives it ta me, and I'll show ya tha prettiest pair o' titties in Florence.

TINKER *(laughing.)*

Be off with ya.

(He gives her a friendly shove, and she giggles.)

PROSTITUTE

Oh, look at that !

(She points to five men who are staggering through the portal, beneath the weight of a great poster-bed with the torn silk of its canopy clinging to the posts.)

Pickin's I calls that.

(To the men.)

I'll sleep with tha lot o' ya, if ya'll take it ta my place.

(They grin and stagger off at the right.)

TINKER

Bice'd look nice in that.

PROSTITUTE

She'd be lost in it. That's plenty o' room in it fer you an' me an' her.

TINKER

There's room enough fer six, and I'll bet that Piero didn' lie in it alone neither.

PROSTITUTE *(laughing.)*

Not if he was anything like his father.

(A great shout of amusement goes up, as a drunken man staggers through the portal, holding a large bottle in one hand, and a chamber in the other.)

A STREET ARAB *(shrilly.)*

Look what tha fool drinks out o'.

DRUNKARD *(waving the pot genially.)*

Thash awrye, thash awrye. Taysh jush azh goo' outta pot azh outta mug.

(The crowd guffaws and applauds approvingly.)

Medici drank goo' wine, damgoo' wine.

(He sits down on the "ringhiera" and is lost to sight. Two old harridans pass out of the portal, carrying a great bundle of silks and linens.)

PROSTITUTE

Mother o' Gord, look at that stuff !

(She goes to the women, and taking a shift of lace and fine linen off the top, holds it up to the light for inspection, and then replaces it.)

No wonder ladies looks proud when they wears things like that.

FIRST HARRIDAN

Them's tha stuff ter get a man.

SECOND HARRIDAN *(with a guffaw.)*

Wot kine o' man coulds ya get with that ? It wouldn't go round your leg.

PROSTITUTE

Any more stuff like that inside ?

FIRST HARRIDAN

Cupboards full of it, dearie. Help yourself, Medici's givin' 'em away ter-day.

(The prostitute makes a rush for the portal, and disappears inside.)

SECOND HARRIDAN

She'll get a armful, and tha treat's on tha Medici, blast him.

(To guardsman.)

Why don't ya gets sum'p'n fer ter remember this day by? Hurrah fer tha Republic !

GUARDSMAN

That ain't a bad idea.

FIRST HARRIDAN

Ya ain't never seed such stuff in all ya life. Them Medicis owned pretty near everything on earth. It's grand ter be rich.

A WASHERWOMAN

Look what I got.

(She shows the guardsman an emerald hung on a rope of pink pearls.)

I'll bet that cost a hundred ducats.

(The guardsman enters the palace.)

FIRST HARRIDAN *(scornfully.)*

A hundred ducats! It cost two hundred ducats if it cost a florin.

(A brawny cutthroat sneaks up behind the washerwoman, and snatching the jewel, makes off as fast as his legs can carry him.)

WASHERWOMAN

Tha dirty bastard! Well, there's plenty where that come from.

(Grinning cheerfully, she re-enters the palace and disappears.)

A FRIAR

Down with the balls ! Long live the Republic ! This is a grand day for Florence.

(He pulls out a great ruby from his habit, and eyes it gloatingly.)

This is better than selling pardons.

(There is a sudden uproar, as three men emerge from the portal of the palace, brawling over a golden goblet. Pulling out a dagger, one stabs at his companion, and in the ensuing confusion, the goblet falls to the ground to be picked up by a street Arab who makes away with it.)

Down with the balls ! Long live the Republic !

(The sound of the fray grows nearer and nearer, and three nobles rush in at the right, followed by an angry mob armed with pikes and billhooks, who sweeps them off to the left. The mob is joined by the marauders who are looting the palace, and the stage is left empty, save for the guzzling drunkard who is now seen sitting on the steps of the "ringhiera.")

DRUNKARD *(lifting his pot.)*

Down wizh zhe ballsh, long live 'Public !

CURTAIN

EPISODE THREE

FLORENCE, 1494

(The great council chamber in the Palace of the Signory. On a dais are two carven chairs upholstered in Genoa velvet, which face a great number of chairs of the same kind, on which

the members of the Syndic are to seat themselves. Francesco Gaddi and Domenico Giotto occupy the chairs on the dais. At the rise of the curtain, Gaddi and Giotto are the only people in the room.)

GIOTTO

Was the king's entrance into Florence impressive ?

GADDI

It would have been more so, if it had not been raining. Throngs of people were present, however, and the king entered the city, mounted on a magnificent charger, with his lance levelled. The Cardinal of Saint Malo and a few marshals were at his side. Then came the royal body-guard of one hundred bowmen and two hundred knights in magnificent armour. These were followed by the Swiss guards in parti-colors, and bearing halberds of burnished steel, rich plumes waving in the helmets of the officers. These were followed by vast numbers of the Gascon infantry, and by the cavalry which was composed of the flower of the French aristocracy, displaying finely wrought weapons, mantles of gorgeous brocade, velvet banners, and flags embroidered with scarlet and gold. Then came the cuirassiers, men of terrible aspect, whose horses were monsters with tails and ears cropped. Last of all, came the Scotch archers, men of unusual height, carrying enormous wooden bows. In all, the number of men amounted to over twelve thousand.

(There is a sudden noise at the doors of the chamber, and both men spring to their feet, and rush out by a small door at the side, as the great doors are flung open wide. The King of France, the Cardinal of Saint Malo, and Piero di Capponi enter, followed by the members of the Syndic who are arrayed in the magnificent robes of their office. The youthful king looks like a monster. He has an enormous head, a long nose, a wide, gaping mouth, big, white, purblind eyes, a diminutive body, thin legs, and misshapen feet. He wears a suit of black velvet and a gold and ermine mantle. Capponi escorts the king and the cardinal to the dais. All present seat themselves

with the exception of Capponi, who remains standing before the dais.)

CAPPONI

Most Illustrious and Gracious Majesty, since an attempt was made by your Majesty's soldiers to bind certain Italian prisoners of war who were threatened with death unless a ransom out of all proportion to the circumstances was paid, and since our freedmen of Florence killed some of your Majesty's men, because they could not witness this sight without striking a blow in defense of justice; the Signory has designated a Syndic to meet here to-day, in order that the matter may be discussed. Your majesty's soldiers have even gone so far as to mark certain houses in the All Saints' Quarter, thus indicating them as the dwellings of their preference, to be used as their own. We would remind your Majesty that Florence is not to be conquered by entering it with lance to hip and chalk in hand.

THE KING *(to the Cardinal.)*

State our wishes.

THE CARDINAL *(from his chair.)*

Messer Capponi, you speak brave words, but brave words are of little worth, unless they be accompanied by brave deeds. You seem to forget that His Most Christian Majesty Charles the Eighth of France has entered Florence as a friend and an ally, and not as a conqueror. The fact that it was at the invitation of Messer Piero de' Medici, who has since been forced to hand over the reins of government, does not change the matter in the least. Moreover, His Most Christian Majesty, who is always a lover of justice, is inclined to be most kindly disposed toward the new government, and is gracious enough to look upon Florence as a free city, although victorious in a war on Italy. For the sake of that justice that he loves so well, he suggests that he be looked upon as the Protector of the Liberty of Florence, and that he be granted the right to hold the Florentine' fortresses for a period of two years, unless the war with Italy be terminated sooner. He also demands, and in all fairness, that he be reimboursed for the tremendous expenditure

of transporting his army from France to Italy in the interests of Florentine liberty, and he suggests that a reasonable sum for this purpose, is two hundred and fifty thousand florins.

CAPPONI

So vast a sum is out of the question. Not only is the Republic unable to pay it, but could it so do, it would not be possible without burdening our citizens unduly.

THE KING *(in a low tone to the Cardinal.)*

How true do you think Capponi's statement is ?

THE CARDINAL *(in a low tone to the King.)*

I think he speaks the truth, but he will bear testing.

THE KING *(to Capponi.)*

Nevertheless, Messer Capponi, it is our royal pleasure that this sum be paid to us.

CAPPONI

It is out of the question, your Majesty.

THE KING *(in a low tone to the Cardinal.)*

What do you think about it, Saint Malo ?

THE CARDINAL *(in a low tone to the King.)*

There is no harm in insisting a little further. If they cannot pay, we shall soon find out.

THE KING

Read my ultimatum, Cardinal.

(The Cardinal, taking a paper from his cape, reads.)

THE CARDINAL

His most Christian Majesty Charles the Eighth demands that he be paid the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand florins by the city of Florence, before he will consider the evacuation of the said city...

CAPPONI *(interrupting.)*

The payment of such a sum is out of the question.

THE KING *(furiously.)*

Then we shall sound our trumpets.

CAPPONI *(turning as red as fire.)*

And we shall ring our bells !

CURTAIN

EPISODE FOUR

FLORENCE, 1494

(A small room in the palace of the Signory. Capponi and Savonarola are seated before a table, engaged in earnest conversation.)

CAPPONI

The treaty has been signed, Prior. It stipulates that there shall be an enduring friendship between the Republic and the King, the subjects of both having reciprocal protection ; that the King is to receive the title of Restorer and Protector of the Liberty of Florence ; that he is to be paid the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand florins in three installments ; that he is to retain the fortresses for a period of two years, unless the war should be terminated earlier, in which event they are to be given back without delay ; that the Pisans are to be pardoned if they resume their allegiance to Florence ; that the price is to be taken off the heads of the de' Medici ; that the estates of Giuliano and Giovanni are to remain confiscated, and that the de' Medici are to remain in banishment.

The King agreed to leave the city immediately, but day after day

passes, and still he remains. He and his followers have sacked the de' Medici palace and have taken its priceless treasures. What the people did there on the first day of the revolution, before the guards could stop them, was a mere nothing.

SAVONAROLA

All this I know, Messer Capponi, but what's to be done ?

CAPPONI

The King has the greatest respect for you, and looks upon your prophecies as divine revelation. The people are chafing under the continued delay of departure, and trouble may break out at any moment. As a matter of fact it is entirely due to your good influence that they have kept quiet until now. You are more responsible for our recently won liberty than the rest of us put together. Your denunciation of tyranny from the pulpit has opened the eyes of us all. As you know, I was a faithful servant of de' Medici for many years...

SAVONAROLA *(interrupting.)*

To be a good servant to a bad master is an excellent proof of loyalty.

CAPPONI

But that a de' Medici should barter Pisa and Leghorn for French protection, is more than flesh and blood can stand. In the recent revolution, you have proved yourself to be a pillar of strength. Now I ask you in the name of the Signory, to undertake the very delicate mission of asking the French king to leave Tuscany. Do you see your way to do this ?

SAVONAROLA

I shall be glad to undertake this mission, for I have the interests of Florence before me all of the time.

CAPPONI *(smiling.)*

That is well known to all of us. Your faithfulness and your integrity are beyond questioning. If you succeed in persuading

Charles to depart, you will find that the Republic is not ungrateful. And there is another matter of which I would speak. God has made you a friar, but by nature, you are a born leader of men. In all of my long life, you are the first man that I have seen who is as capable in leading men from the pulpit, as others have been capable in leading them, from the rostrum and in the assembly. There is no use in mincing matters with you, for directness of purpose and crystal clarity are the only methods in which you are interested, or which can be used in dealing with you. Father, could you be induced to give up the cloister for the State ?

SAVONAROLA *(simply.)*

Just exactly what have you in mind, Messer Capponi ?

CAPPONI *(smiling.)*

Nothing official has been done yet, but I am sure that there would be no difficulty in getting the Signory to accept you as one of its members, for you are a rare leader of men. I am sure also that in time you would succeed in becoming the Grand Gonfalonier of Florence, the highest gift within the power of the Republic.

SAVONAROLA *(agitated.)*

I never dreamed of such a thing.

CAPPONI *(smiling.)*

I know ; people who live for others, rarely dream for themselves.

SAVONAROLA *(solemnly.)*

I could not think of such a thing, for I serve One Who is far greater than the Republic of Tuscany.

(In a ringing tone of voice.)

I serve the Lord Jesus Christ !

(Both bow their heads.)

But such service does not exclude service to the Republic. As a matter of fact, it rather increases its possibility.

CAPPONI *(struck with a sudden thought.)*

Of course it does ! You have proved yourself to be a man in ten thousand, a man whose honesty of thought and directness of action is a sad exception in this intriguing and underhanded Italy of to-day. Not only are you impeccable as a man and a friar, but you have a rare vision and a genius for government. Why not be with us *ex officio*, so to speak ? Lend us your ability and help us to direct the State, so that it may become the greatest in all Italy, through your fearlessness, your open-mindedness, and your love of righteousness. Be our guide, and lead us to the light of wisdom and of virtue, through the grace of Your Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

SAVONAROLA *(springing to his feet.)*

Do you mean this, Messer Capponi ?

CAPPONI *(solemnly.)*

With all my heart and soul, so help me God !

SAVONAROLA *(the tears running down his face.)*

Then, God helping me, I am your man.

CAPPONI *(rising.)*

Then the integrity of the Republic is assured. And remember, Prior, come what will, I am your friend.

SAVONAROLA *(sadly.)*

And God knows that I shall need friends. I lost my dearest friend, the day the French king entered Florence.

CAPPONI

And who was that ?

SAVONAROLA

Count Pico della Mirandola.

CAPPONI *(shaking his head.)*

A brilliant youth.

SAVONAROLA *(sorrowfully.)*

I was with him at the last. He wished to enter Saint Mark's, but he put it off until it was too late. He begged me to allow him to be buried in the habit of the order, and to refuse this was one of the hardest things that I ever had to do in all my life.

CAPPONI *(changing the subject.)*

Then you will undertake governing from beneath the wing of the Church, Prior ?

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

I cannot meddle with the government, but I shall be pleased to give you my opinions on all matters that appertain to the welfare of Florence, and God grant that they may be wise.

CURTAIN

EPISODE FIVE

FLORENCE, 1494

(A gate of the city, which is the same as that in part one, episode one. The few remaining soldiers of the French expeditionary force are straggling through the central arch of the gate, and the townsfolk are watching their departure with evident satisfaction, as they give vent to howls of derision. Beppo, a guardsman, is standing near his lodge and watching the evacuation with evident pleasure.)

A STREET ARAB *(shaking his fist at a passing infantryman.)*

Yah, ya dirty ole pig-face !

(Beppo rushes over to the lad and shakes him violently by the arm.)

BEPPO

Shut up, ya silly little fool ! Don't ya know no better nor ter make 'em mad ?

STREET ARAB *(whimpering.)*

He don't know no Italian.

BEPPO *(severely.)*

Ya never can tell. Ya shut up, or I'll pull tha gizzards out o' ya !

(He gives the boy a friendly push, who immediately scampers away to be lost in the crowd.)

A WOMAN *(to Beppo.)*

This is a grand day fer Florence, ain' it ?

BEPPO

Yes, and do ya know who done it ?

THE WOMAN

The Friar.

BEPPO *(proudly.)*

Ya said it ! I seen him tha very first time he come ter Florence. He passed by this here very gate he did, and I talked with him, and I showed him tha way ter Saint Mark's, I did. I says that I hoped that he'd have a good time, and he says he hoped that Florence would be the better fer his coming.

THE WOMAN

Well, Florence is a lot better fer his coming, ain't it ?

BEPPO

Sure, and...

(He is interrupted by a noise. One of the French soldiers kisses a wench and gets his face slapped for his pains. He is about to run her through with his sword, when he is prevented

from so doing by his colleagues. Beppo rushes over to the girl.)

Ya damn slut ! Don't ya know no better nor that ? I've a mind ter send ya ter tha Bargello.

GIRL *(sulkily.)*

He kissed me, he did, the dirty beast !

BEPPO

Yes, but there ain't no need ter make a row about it, is there ? It ain't tha first time a soldier ever kissed a jade, is it ? Don't ya make no trouble with tha Frenchmen. If ya don't want ter be kissed, why stay at home, ya little fool !

(While this conversation is going on, a Captain of the guard joins the pair.)

CAPTAIN *(to Beppo.)*

That's right, guardsman ! We wish no trouble to-day. It's too big a day for Florence, to have it spoiled at the last minute. The Friar's a great man. Did you hear how he persuaded the French king to leave Florence ?

BEPPO

No, but he's tha greatest man wot ever lived.

CAPTAIN

When Charles refused to leave Florence, he told the Friar that no friar, or priest, or pope could make him go ; that the only way to make him budge was to perform a miracle. The Friar, increasing his stature by at least ten feet, blew fire from his ears, and made a noise like a dragon, and that was the last of the French !

BEPPO *(enthusiastically.)*

I've always said that Savonarola's tha smartest man in Florence. I seen him tha first time he ever come ter tha city. He says ter me, he says—

CAPTAIN *(smiling.)*

You've told me that ten times before.

A FRANCISCAN FRIAR

Captain, you have the story incorrectly. It was the King who blew fire from his ears, and Savonarola turned the fire to water and ruined Charles's garments.

A VENDOR

Both o' ya is wrong. My cousin was there and tole me that tha Friar froze tha King inter a statue, and refused ter change him back ter a man, until he signed a paper that he would go immejutly. And he said he'd do tha same ter tha French army.

(Three carts filled with army supplies drive through the press of the people, to the accompaniment of many cries of terror. These are followed by an Italian cavalry officer in armour of gold and burnished steel. As the last cart passes through the gate, he turns to the people.)

CAVALRY OFFICER

There goes the last of the French army !

PEOPLE

Hurrah ! Long live the Republic ! Long live Savonarola !

(Caps and sticks and pikes are flung into the air, and there is a prolonged demonstration of joy.)

CAVALRY OFFICER

Don't forget Piero di Capponi.

(Wheeling his horse, he dashes through the central arch, after the carts.)

PEOPLE

Long live Piero Capponi !

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *(to Beppo.)*

It's a great day for Florence !

BEPPO

Indeed it is, and ter think that I seen Savonarola tha first time he ever come ter tha city !

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

They say the fire came out of his ears.

(A Dominican friar overhearing this remark, approaches the captain of the guard.)

DOMINICAN FRIAR *(to captain of the guard severely.)*

I am astonished that a man of your ability should be taken in by such childishness. Such a belief detracts from the greatness of the man who has accomplished so much for Florence. Now listen to me, and I'll tell you the truth of the matter, so that you will not be repeating old wives' tales around Florence. Fra Girolamo told the king that his delay in leaving the city would cause great injury both to the city and to Charles' own enterprise, and told him not to be forgetful of the duty imposed upon him by Providence, lest that it be a detriment to royal welfare. He bade him pursue the kingly journey without delay, or ruin would be brought upon the city, and the anger of God against himself. And the king listened to him, and we have seen the last of the French. Our noble Prior is as great in courage as in piety.

(By this time, the gate is deserted, all of the people having left, save Beppo, the Captain of the Guard, and the Dominican.)

VOICES OF THE PEOPLE *(in the distance.)*

Long live Savonarola ! Long live the Republic ! Long live Savonarola !

CURTAIN

EPISODE SIX

VENICE, 1494

(A room in Piero de' Medici's house on the Grand Canal. De' Medici is seated before a long carven walnut table. He is

a young man of about twenty-five years of age, with an elongated face, a long nose, thick lips, a cleft chin, and shifting eyes. He wears a scarlet mantle flung over a green suit. Seated beside him, as he pores over a document, are Cardinal Battese and Enrico Turli, both men of middle years.)

DE' MEDICI *(looking up from the document.)*

This is excellent !

BATTESE

Yes, but in spite of the Pisan rebellion, things are not going well for us. The Friar has captured the hearts of the people, and the Florentines support him to a man. Measures are proposed and accepted blindly, that would have been laughed to scorn in the days of your illustrious father.

DE' MEDICI

What measures ?

BATTESE

Savonarola has persuaded the Florentines to fear God.

DE' MEDICI *(laughing.)*

That's ridiculous ! Surely you are not in earnest ?

BATTESE

I am absolutely serious. Moreover, he has reformed manners and has inspired a zeal for popular government and public welfare, in preference to all private interests. He has also advocated a general reconciliation, whereby the friends of the past government shall be absolved of all of their crimes and even their fines shall be remitted, and indulgence is to be shown to all debtors of the State.

DE' MEDICI *(sneering.)*

There speaks the priest.

TURLI

Why that is the cleverest thing he could suggest. The man is

a born politician. Your illustrious grandfather always worked on that principle. He forgave old Pitti, and from then on, had one of his strongest henchmen in him.

BATTESE

The Friar's no fool. He advocates also a universal government which shall include all citizens who are to share in the rule of the State, according to an ancient statute.

DE' MEDICI

How do the governors take these suggestions ?

BATTESE

That's the astonishing part of it. Due to the fact that the Friar's prophecies have been fulfilled, these ideas have tremendous weight with them. They have accepted a plan to form a Grand Council patterned after that of Venice. But the grave danger lies in the fact that Florence is being run from the pulpit. And what makes it worse, is that Savonarola is absolutely honest. An honest government is bad for private interests.

TURLI

Already a council has been established that is empowered to create all of the State magistrates, and this has become the sovereign power of the State. All citizens are eligible to it, who are over twenty-nine years of age, and who have paid their taxes.

DE' MEDICI

Great God ! And what does the Sforza say to this ?

TURLI

He shrugs his shoulders and smiles, and says that the people of Florence have gone stark, staring mad.

DE' MEDICI

How does the Pope take it ?

BATTESE

He turns purple with rage, and declares that he will have the hair and hide of this meddling Friar.

DE' MEDICI *(smiling.)*

Then I do not think that we need worry.

BATTESE

A Friar backed by a Republic that is earnest, is no slight opponent.

TURLI

Savonarola has abolished continual loans and arbitrary imposts and urges all citizens to be devoted to their Commune.

DE' MEDICI *(contemptuously.)*

What nonsense !

BATTESE

It may be nonsense, but it's working beautifully.

DE' MEDICI

What is the matter with the dagger in these days ? Has the blood of the Florentines turned to water ?

TURLI

Savonarola is the idol of the people, and woe betide any man who attempts to take his life.

DE' MEDICI

I'll have him killed myself.

BATTESE

At this time, such a course would be most unwise. The people would ferret out the man behind the deed, and rend him to bits. Don't you suppose the Pope would have had him out of the way before this, had it been safe to do so ? I do not think that even the Borgia could plot such a thing and escape unscathed. The people idolize Savonarola.

TURLI

The man is so well loved, that he has persuaded the Signory to pass a law to punish any citizen eligible to office, if he be found guilty of a public offense. The Signory now acts on the theory that the Republic consists of one body only, that body being all of the people. But the greatest reform accomplished so far is the passing of a law that gives the right of appeal against the vote of the six beans.

DE' MEDICI

Good God, that is equivalent to the abolition of the lion's mouth, here in Venice !

BATTESE *(drily.)*

Exactly.

TURLI

The Signory has voted away its right to call a parliament.

DE' MEDICI *(excitedly.)*

Then all is lost !

TURLI

Savonarola has established a government pawn shop, and has made an interest above seven and a half per centum usurious.

DE' MEDICI

Where would the house of de' Medici be, were it not for thirty-two and a half per centum ?

BATTESE

All of this has been accomplished without a sword being drawn, or one drop of blood spilled. The Friar has made no harangue in the streets, nor has he had a seat in the councils. All laws are now drawn up in the vernacular, so that any citizen who reads may understand them.

DE' MEDICI

What's to be done ?

TURLI

Nothing for the present.

DE' MEDICI *(fuming.)*

Do I have to stay in this damned hole forever ?

BATTESE *(smiling drily.)*

For the present it will agree with you far better than Florence.

CURTAIN

EPISODE SEVEN

FLORENCE, 1495

(A street near the cathedral, which is empty save for a water-carrier who is crying his wares.)

WATER-CARRIER

Water, water, nice cool water !

(A window opens, and a housewife thrusts her head out.)

HOUSEWIFE

How much ?

(The water-carrier holds up two fingers, and in reply, the woman holds up one finger. The water-carrier nods his assent, and the housewife slips a rope with a bucket tied to it over a pulley attached to a crane, and lowers the bucket to the street. After he has taken a coin from the bottom of the bucket, the water-carrier fills it, and the housewife pulls it up to the level of the room and taking in the bucket, closes the window. The water-carrier continues crying his wares, and disappears at left, his voice growing fainter and fainter.)

WATER-CARRIER

Water, water, nice cool water !

(Counts Gastone Pariri and Alessandro Giovi enter at the opposite ends of the stage.)

GIOVI

Good day, Gastone, and how are things with you ?

PARIRI *(smiling.)*

Well, thank you, Alessandro. What are you doing here so early in the morning ?

GIOVI

I am on my way to look at a picture that I am thinking of purchasing.

PARIRI

And how are things with you ?

GIOVI

Things have been going badly for me since the cursed Friar has taken to running Florence. What is your attitude toward the government ?

PARIRI

I'm no friend of the Friar.

GIOVI

Neither am I.

PARIRI

I hate the Friar's Party.* Savonarola has made it very difficult for us nobles. I cannot subscribe to his rule wholeheartedly. Yet I'd be a fool if I did not see that he has done big things for Florence. I like the popular government, but I hate the Friar.

*The Friar's Party or Frateschi, later called the Snivellers or Piagnoni.

GIOVI *(laughing.)*

That makes you a White*.

PARIRI

Yes, but is not one of the aims of this Friar, to make all men white ?

(He laughs.)

GIOVI

I cannot take the matter as lightly as you do. I'm a Grey**. I owe my pardon to Savonarola, but I hate him. I'm for the banished de' Medici and I and my party will leave no stone unturned until we have him back in Florence. We Grays are for de' Medici, and it seems to me, my dear Count, that that is where you rightfully belong. You should support your class, and all those who stand for it. Savonarola, damn him, has not made it pleasant for us nobles nowadays.

PARIRI

It seems to me that he has been more than magnanimous in pardoning factions. Such a thing has never been known before in the history of Florence. I do not love the Friar, but his government is just.

GIOVI

I could never endorse such a luke warm attitude as that. I hate the Friar and wish to see the de' Medici restored. My party is determined to undermine Savonarola in any manner and by any means that is possible.

(Count Gionata Masche enters at the right.)

Here comes Gionata Masche.

PARIRI *(bowing.)*

Good day, Count.

*The White Party was known as the Bianchi.

**The Grey Party was known as the Bigi.

MASCHE *(bowing.)*

Good morning, Gentlemen. What are you two discussing so earnestly ?

PARIRI *(laughing.)*

The only thing that one ever discusses earnestly, politics, of course.

MASCHE

I thought that one included religion in the category of things for earnest discussion.

GIOVI

What are your political convictions, Count ?

MASCHE

Well, I loathe Piero de' Medici and I would do anything to keep him from returning to Florence. On the other hand, I hate the cursed Friar and his present popular government. It seems to me that the ideal thing would be a Republic in the hands of the aristocracy. The damned followers of the Friars are a dirty lot of sneaking snivellers, curse them !

(Struck with a sudden thought.)

By God, that's the very name for the Friar's Party, the Snivellers !

GIOVI

Then you belong to the party that is known as the Maddened *?

MASCHE

Yes, by God !

PARIRI *(laughing.)*

Then we three are about as completely opposed as it is possible for men to be.

MASCHE *(vehemently.)*

Yes, and there's the trouble. There is strength in union, and

*The Arrabbiati.

Florence is a house divided against itself. This is what makes the Friar so powerful. I hate de' Medici, and I loathe Savonarola, and all the members of my party feel this way. But you and your respective parties oppose us so bitterly, that we can do nothing.

GIOVI

Well, we can say the same to you. Join the Greys.

PARIRI

No, join the Whites.

MASCHE

Persuade your parties to join the Maddened. Then we'll get rid of both de' Medici and Savonarola.

PARIRI *(laughing.)*

We seem to be hopelessly unable to come to an agreement.

MASCHE

Look out for the party called the Maddened, we'll get the Friar and de' Medici yet. This matter is a serious thing, for day by day matters are going from bad to worse. What we need in Florence is —

CURTAIN

EPISODE EIGHT

FLORENCE, 1495

(A council chamber in the Palace of the Signory. The curtain rises, disclosing a conclave of theologians in the midst of their discussion. Filippo Coribizzi presides, and at his side is seated Marsilio Ficino. Savonarola is sitting among the theologians and Fra Domenico da Ponzo is speaking.)

DA PONZO

And any friar who interests himself in the affairs of the State seriously exceeds his duties as a Christian.

(He seats himself among the theologians.)

CORIBIZZI *(from the chair.)*

It is my intention to proceed against Fra Girolamo Savonarola, and for this purpose, I have summoned him to the conclave.

FICINO

We all know that Fra Girolamo is a holy man, and that his honesty of motive is beyond question ; but is it wise for one trained in a monastery to forsake the quiet of the cloister for the seething tumult of politics ?

A FRANCISCAN FRIAR *(to a colleague.)*

This is a ruse of the Arrabbiati. Savonarola is making enemies right and left these days.

SECOND FRANCISCAN FRIAR *(to first Franciscan Friar.)*

Not only is Fra Girolamo making enemies, but he is putting his head into a noose. Yet he is honest, and the force of honesty often conquers the power of intrigue. He is a holy man, and I have great faith in his ability, and he is capable of handling any situation.

DA RIETI *(rising.)*

Messer Coribizzi, although Fra Girolamo and I are members of the same order, I feel that it is my duty to protest vigorously against one who so forgets his obligations as a friar, that he takes part in the affairs of the State. No true follower of Saint Dominic should forget his duty to such an extent, and I have the right to question the virtue of one who can do such a thing. A friar belongs to God and not to the State, and if he takes up the burden of State affairs, he is open to the criticism of all holy men. The friar who attends to his religious duties properly, has no time for other things. Fra

Girolamo must choose between God and the State ; for it is not possible for him to serve two masters.

(There is a murmur of approval, and da Rieti sits down. Savonarola rises and addresses the Gonfalonier.)

SAVONAROLA

Filii matris meae pugnaverunt contra me*. It saddens me to see that my fiercest foe is clad in the robe of Saint Dominic. The spicy little clove** is not as pungent in his remarks to-day as usual. The robe that he wears should remind him that our founder took no small part in wordly affairs and that our order has produced a multitude of saints and holy men who have been engaged in affairs of State.

The Florentine Republic must surely remember Cardinal Latino***, Saint Peter Martyr****, Saint Catherine of Siena*****, and Saint Antoine******, all members of the Order of Saint Dominic. To be concerned with the affairs of this world in which God himself has placed us, is no crime in a friar, unless he should mix in them without any higher aim, and without seeking to promote the cause of religion. I challenge all of you present to cite a single passage in the Bible forbidding men to give their support to a free government in order to insure the triumph of morality and religion. Far easier will it be to find it forbidden to discuss religion in profane places, or theology in the palace.

*The Sons of my mother will fight against me.

**Due to his temper and to his subtlety in an argument, da Rieti was known as "Garofinano" or spicy little clove.

***The friar preacher Latino Frangipani Malabranca was created cardinal in 1279 by Pope Nicholas III to reconcile political parties in Florence.

****Saint Peter Martyr, after Saint Dominic the most honored member of the Dominican Order, when put to death by assassins, endeavored to write the words of the creed on the ground, with his own blood.

*****Saint Catherine of Siena, one of the great lights of the Dominican Order, was mediator between the Pope and the hostile states, and induced Pope Gregory XI to return from Avignon to Rome. On the breaking out of the Great Schism, she took the part of Urban VI.

******Saint Antoine, the great Prior of Saint Mark's in Florence and Archbishop of Florence, was a great organizer of charitable institutions.

A CARTHUSIAN FRIAR *(springing to his feet.)*

Come then, tell us plainly, are your words truly inspired by God, or are they not ?

SAVONAROLA *(calmly.)*

That which I have said, I have said plainly, and there is nothing more to add now.

CURTAIN

EPISODE NINE

FLORENCE, 1495

(A melon stall in the old market, on which countless golden melons are piled. A vendor is talking with the carter, from whom he has bought the fruit.)

CARTER

Wot's got inter Florence these days ?

VENDOR

It ain't tha same place it useter be. The noble ladies is dressin' theirselves simple, and ya don't never see no jools or fineries these days. They even eats different, fer I don't sell near as many melons as I useter.

CARTER

I passed young Riario dell' Aquila on my way here ter work this mornin.' I useter work for his father, when Riario was a lad, and a worse young jackanapes ya never did see. He useter git drunk every night, and there wasn't a wench on tha place wot he hadn't knowed. His clothes was tha envy of all tha young bloods in the quarter. Well, ter-day, if tha young feller wasn't dressed as sober

as a lawyer's clerk, God strike me pink ! And wattcha think he had in his fist ?

VENDOR

I dunno.

CARTER

Christ burn me, if he didn't have a prayer-book !

(He gives a great guffaw.)

A prayer-book, and he useter carry around tha dirtiest songs of tha day. It's tha damnedest thing I ever hears of. Wot's tha matter with Florence ?

VENDOR

It's tha Friar !

CARTER

By tha toe-nails of Saint Catherine, ya don't mean ter tell me that that feller has gave Florence religion ?

VENDOR

He has.

CARTER

It can't be true.

VENDOR

It is. Go inter a shop these days, and wot does ya see ? Tha shopkeepers sittin' quiet like, a-readin' their Bibles or tha Friar's books, when they useter be stealin' kisses or worse, behind tha doors. But there's things more wonderful nor that. Tha other day, I seen a couple of ole skinflints give back some of their ill-got money in church. I seen it with me own eyes, I did.

CARTER

Naw !

VENDOR

Gord strike me dead if I didn't !

CARTER

That's tha worst ever. I wishes ter Christ, some feller would give some ill-gottcon gains ter me, or that I had a few ter restore ter meself.

(He chuckles.)

VENDOR *(laughing.)*

Go long with ya !

CARTER

Has all Florence went daffy ?

VENDOR

Naw, there's them wot hates tha Friar. And as time goes on, there'll be a lot more. Th'Arrabbiati are makin' fun of him and his followers openly these days, callin' 'em Sniveller*, Wrynecks**, Toadies***, and Prayer-Mumblers****. Tha Florentines ain't goody-goodies and this can't last.

CARTER

Well, tha sooner it's over, tha better. I fer one, prefers ter be with a pretty wench behind doors, ter readin' tha Bible in front o' tha shop. Anyhow, I can't read.

VENDOR *(shaking his head.)*

It ain't nachral, it ain't nachral !

CURTAIN

*Piagnoni.
**Collitorti.
***Stropiccioni.
****Masticapaternostri.

EPISODE TEN

ROME, 1496

(A room in the Vatican. The Pope is seated before a table that is littered with documents. In spite of his sixty-five years and of his dissipated look, he is magnificent in appearance. As the curtain rises, he is talking with an attendant who stands beside his chair.)

BORGIA

Now note carefully what we have to say, for it is important that our instructions be carried out to the letter. The Marchioness must be undisturbed while she remains here, and must not be seen either entering or leaving the Vatican. Has Ettore received his instructions ?

ATTENDANT

Yes, Your Holiness. He conducts the lady disguised as a page to this door, and as soons as she arrives, I am to wait outside and see that no one enters.

BORGIA

That's correct.

(There is a knock at the door which the attendant opens, and ushers in a woman disguised as a page. She wears a gorgeous mantle, tunic, doublet, and hose of sky-blue brocade and shoes of silver. Bowing, the attendant retires, closing the door after him.)

MARCHIONESS

Why did you send for me, Rodrigo ?

BORGIA *(testily.)*

How many times have we told you not to call us Rodrigo ?

MARCHIONESS

The habit of a lifetime is not easily broken.

BORGIA

Well, we advise you to break it, for there are those who have been called from life suddenly, for offenses to us that were considerably less serious.

MARCHIONESS *(laughing.)*

We are always the same, Our Holiness. The years have not improved our manners in the least. We were always spoiled, and I see that being Pope has not improved us greatly. We haven't asked I to sit down.

BORGIA *(grandly.)*

People do not sit in our presence.

MARCHIONESS *(smiling.)*

We take ourself very seriously, do us not ? Since we do not ask I to be seated, we must seat ourself.

(She sits on the table with her legs dangling.)

You know Rodr.., Your Holiness, no Rodrigo, for I shall never get used to Your Holiness. Besides, I have known you too long to permit you to take this attitude with me. Twenty of my forty years have been spent mostly in your company, and although I don't know why, I happen to be very fond of you. I confess that I'm curious to know why you sent for me to come here. It's the first time you've so honored me, and I must admit that there is something fascinating in an intrigue under the very roof of Saint-Peter.

BORGIA *(roaring.)*

You fool ! You do not think that we sent for you for that ! There are some things that even a Borgia does not do.

(Blandly.)

We have asked you to come here with the intention of entrusting a very delicate mission to you.

MARCHIONESS *(interested.)*

Yes.

BORGIA

Something that will need all your woman's intuition and wit.

MARCHIONESS

What is it ?

BORGIA *(smiling.)*

Not so fast, we must have some proof that you can be true to this trust.

MARCHIONESS

You know that you may trust me, Rodrigo.

BORGIA

You have proved worthy of trust in the past, but before we send you on this mission, we must put you to a severe test.

MARCHIONESS

You frighten me.

BORGIA

Moreover, there will be ten thousand ducats in this for you.

MARCHIONESS

Who is going to pay me ?

BORGIA

We shall pay you.

MARCHIONESS *(laughing.)*

You ? It must be some frightful undertaking that makes you willing to part with your gold. Next to women, you love money. I have never been able to decide which of the two you love the more.

BORGIA *(snarling.)*

Look out, you may go too far. Even the past will not excuse you if you go too far.

MARCHIONESS

Well, don't let's beat about the bush, what do you wish me to do ?

BORGIA

The mission that we have in mind for you, means the ruin of a man whom we hate.

MARCHIONESS

You hate so many men, Rodrigo.

BORGIA *(growling.)*

We hate this one more than all of the rest of them put together.

MARCHIONESS

Who is he ?

BORGIA *(laughing shortly.)*

We shall not tell you until we have put you to the test. Are you afraid to kill ?

MARCHIONESS *(jumping down from the table.)*

Great God, yes !

BORGIA *(sternly.)*

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, Thy God in vain !

MARCHIONESS *(smiling.)*

Rodrigo, I can never understand your attitude toward religion. In the past twenty years, I have known you to do so many things that are not in the least compatible with your attitude toward God...

BORGIA *(grandiosely.)*

The things that I do as a man, and the things that we do as Vicar of Christ are entirely separate. As Pope, we are infallible, as man, I am mortal. As Pope, we please God, as man, I please myself. When we are in the chair we can do no wrong. Extra cathedra, I do as I please. The two things have nothing to do

with one another. The rarest wine is contained in the dustiest bottles. It is our pleasure that you kill a man for us, and we must make certain that you will not betray us. With this end in view, we have had your son, Zeno, brought to the Vatican. Unless you promise not to betray us, we shall have him put out of the way.

MARCHIONESS *(pacing back and forth angrily.)*

What a coward you are !

BORGIA *(grimly.)*

The reason that we have succeeded so well in life, my dear Giulia, is because we are efficient. Before we take any step, every preparation has been made for it.

MARCHIONESS *(bitterly.)*

I am in your power. Were it not for that, I'd have broken with you years ago, in spite of the fact that you are a fascinating Devil.

BORGIA *(urbanely.)*

No woman breaks with us. When we are tired of an attachment, we do the breaking. But you wrong us, my dear Guilia, we have no intention of forcing this thing upon you. You are free to choose. If you undertake this mission, your son remains here as a hostage. If you fail, you will lose your life, but he will go free. If you betray us, he loses his life, and if you succeed both of you will be free, and richer by ten thousand ducats. Come, what do you say ?

MARCHIONESS

Really, you cannot expect me to decide a matter of life and death so quickly. I suppose that I should feel flattered that you have chosen me.

BORGIA *(laughing.)*

It is necessary for us to have a woman carry out this plan, in order to allay suspicion.

MARCHIONESS

Well, give me until to-morrow morning to decide.

BORGIA

Very well, but Zeno will remain under our roof for to-night, and should you decide to undertake the mission, he will remain longer, of course.

(He taps a bell and the attendant enters.)

Have Ettore conduct the Marchioness to her home. Good-night, Giulia, happy dreams.

(The Marchioness goes out with the attendant and a second attendant enters the room and bows to the Pope.)

ATTENDANT

His Eminence, Cardinal Battese and Messer Enrico Turli await an audience.

BORGIA

Bid them enter.

(The attendant bows and withdraws and immediately Battese and Turli enter and bow to the Pope, the attendant closing the door.)

Be seated, Gentlemen.

(Battese and Turli seat themselves.)

We hope that you have brought good news.

TURLI

I fear not, Your Holiness.

BORGIA *(dissembling joviality.)*

What is the latest insubordination of the fractious friar ?

BATTESE

He becomes more popular with the people every day.

BORGIA *(snarling.)*

The devil is in that man ! Everything has gone badly since he became the Prior of Saint Mark's. We bring in the French to rid Naples of Aragon, and they turn out to be worse than the Aragonese.

TURLI

Yes, Your Holiness, even my master, Duke Ludivico Sforza is becoming uneasy over the might of the French.

BORGIA

To offset this, we form a new league with Venice and Spain, and the French fly to Savonarola for advice, and with a few words he throws more fear into them than we can with all of our leagues. The French now hold the Sultan's brother and Cesare as hostages. The Sultan's brother meant forty thousand ducats a year to us. Had we killed him, it would have meant a cool three hundred thousand, which is a lot of money for a corpse.

BATTESE

Piero and Charles started for Florence.

BORGIA *(angrily.)*

Yes, and what came of it ? The cursed Piagnoni and Arrabbiati united to defend the city. We thought better of the Arrabbiati than that.

BATTESE

The Arrabbiati will be the salvation of Florence. Just at present, they are with the Piagnoni on account of their hatred for de' Medici. But they hate Savonarola, and if Florence ever succeeds in getting rid of him, it will be through the Arrabbiati. Remember that the French monarch was overawed by the Friar to such an extent, that he lost the Battle of Fornovo. But he has left Italy without restoring the fortresses to Florence, with the exception of Leghorn, and thereby, the Florentines are in a weakened condition.

BORGIA *(bitterly.)*

Yes. And de' Medici acted on that, and with what result ? Savonarola roused the Florentines to action, Piero was surrounded, and the whole expedition went up in smoke. We might have overlooked the defeat of our political aspirations by Savonarola, but he has had the audacity to denounce us and the clergy. What we and the clergy do is none of his business. What right has he to

rail against the morality of the church dignitaries ? It can get him nowhere, and, moreover, it fans into a blaze, gossip that is better left unsaid. We tried to entice him to Rome, where it would have been easy to get him out of the way, but he smelt a rat and would not come. So long as he meddled with politics, we were willing to let him alone. Moreover, we were amused and interested to see him rid Florence of tryants... But when he began to meddle with the business of the Church, and to poke his nose into our personal affairs, he went too far. We tried to get him on matters of doctrine, but he slipped through our fingers again. We tell you the devil is in it !

TURLI

The Duke is beginning to feel the power of the man too. It's strange that a friar has been able to have so great an influence.

BORGIA *(triumphantly.)*

It will not be for long. We have plans and a new agent who will accomplish things.

(He looks at Battese significantly.)

This agent leaves for Florence to-morrow, and very soon, we shall hear the last of Savonarola.

BATTESE

Is it a matter of steel ?

BORGIA

Yes.

BATTESE *(uneasily.)*

Your Holiness, the time is not yet ripe. Remember that the Florentines idolize this man. Those behind such a deed would be ferreted out. Although the Arrabbiati and the Bigi and the Bianchi hate the Friar, these parties are not united. Savonarola is still the idol of the masses...

BORGIA *(furiously.)*

Why do these long-eared reformers always blat for the masses ? Imagine taking the masses into account? It is the height of folly.

The masses are a lot of mangy dogs who are more than likely to bite the hands of those who feed them. This mawkish sentimentality for the masses is always the worst thing about a reformer. Such snivelling emotion is unworthy of any man who aspires to power.

BATTESE

Do not forget that since Savonarola entered the arena of Florentine politics, the people have been restored to power, and that they are still under the spell of this man. I earnestly beg of you to recall your agent, and try to catch Savonarola with honey.

BORGIA

What bait would you use ?

BATTESE

Offer him the cardinal's hat.

BORGIA *(laughing.)*

Of all the men on earth who would look ridiculous under the hat of a cardinal, he is the man. Do you think he is more likely to nibble at this bait than at any other ?

TURLI

Your Holiness, it has been my experience that all men have a price. It is well known that Savonarola loves the Church, and this may be the way to get him.

BATTESE

There is no harm in trying it, at any rate.

BORGIA

We must admit that there is sense in the suggestion. Go immediately to Florence, Battese, and offer Savonarola the cardinal's hat in our name. But make it clear to him that he must change the tone of his sermons, and stop denouncing us.

BATTESE

Your Holiness, would it not be wiser to make no conditions and simply offer him the hat ?

BORGIA

No, for if he decided to continue his denunciations later, they would have more weight coming from a cardinal than coming from a friar. He must consent to our conditions.

TURLI *(to Battese.)*

His Holiness is correct.

BATTESE

Your Holiness, is it wise to send me on this mission ? Savonarola is aware that I am no friend of his. Send some one who is a member of the Dominican Order.

BORGIA

That is a good idea. We'll do it.

(He taps a bell and an attendant enters.)

Send Fra Anselmo to me.

(The attendant bows and withdraws.)

This may be the means of bringing the Friar to terms. Good evening, Gentlemen.

(Battese and Turli rise, and after bowing, withdraw. The Pope taps the bell again, and an attendant enters, and bows to the Pope.)

Will you go and present our compliments to the Marquis of Corri, and have him conducted to his mother's house immediately.

(The attendant bows and withdraws.)

It may be the way, and if it is, we save ten thousand ducats.

(He laughs and rubs his hands with satisfaction.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE ELEVEN

FLORENCE, 1496

(A room in Countess Baldi's palace. She and her friend Countess Vitelli, are seated before great frames, engaged in needlework.)

VITELLI

Have you heard about Bettuccio ?

BALDI

No, is he in trouble again ?

VITELLI

Worse than ever.

BALDI

He painted my miniature some months ago. What a joyous lad ! He's the best story-teller, and the best kisser in all of Florence.

VITELLI

And he's no mean fighter either. Taking me home from a masquerade one night, we were molested by two cutthroats. He laid one out for good, and sent the other flying across the Trinity Bridge, and then swore a blue streak because he could not leave me to go after him. A likely lad, too bad he's done for !

BALDI

Surely, he's not dead ?

VITELLI *(laughing.)*

Worse than that, the Friar's got him. He went to one of his sermons, and now he has cast aside his old mode of life, together

with his lute, his rapier, his songs, and his scented raiment. He has just completed his year's novitiate in Saint Mark's, tending the sick and burying the dead, and has taken full vows, and now goes under the name of Fra Benedetto.

BALDI

How romantic ! He has a pretty voice, but I can hardly imagine it raised in chants and litanies, after some of the songs that I've heard him sing. Evidently Savonarola has a most persuasive way.

VITELLI

Yes, but I'm against him.

BALDI *(astonished.)*

Why I thought that you were of the Arrabbiati ?

VITELLI

I am, but the Arrabbiati hate the Friar. They stuck to him because they hate and fear de' Medici even more. But now that the danger of a de' Medici restoration is past, you'll see them wearing their true colors.

BALDI

I'm for Savonarola. See how he has changed this city for the better ! Take the matter of carnival for instance. This year the children went through the city in a great procession and collected three hundred ducats for the poor. No more gluttonous feasting, no more carousals, no more barring of the streets for honest citizens to pay disproportionate tolls. And thank God, the bestial game of the stones was not allowed this year ! Last year I saw little boys dancing around a bonfire, and pelting one another with stones. When the game was finished, three boys lay dead in the street. No, the Friar has done wonders for this town, and in spite of the fact that he supports a popular government. I'm for him.

VITELLI

When I think of what Florence used to be in the days of the Magnificent, I cannot endure this Friar. We need class, and this man

would make the masses as important as the classes. If we do away with an aristocracy, we take all of the color out of life. It is the aristocrat who patronizes art, and who embellishes this city so that it has become the most beautiful in the world. A country must be run by an aristocracy, otherwise the masses soon forget their station in life.

BALDI *(laughing.)*

What a little politician we are.

VITELLI

Well, a woman can't do needlework and rear children all of the time, can she ?

BALDI

Did you hear what happened to Prince Orte last night ?

VITELLI *(interested.)*

No, what happened to him ?

BALDI

He got a shopkeeper's wench in trouble, and the shopkeeper...

CURTAIN

EPISODE TWELVE

FLORENCE, 1496

(A room in the Monastery of Saint Mark. Savonarola is seated before a desk and Fra Domenico Buonvicini stands by his side.)

SAVONAROLA

How is Fra Benedetto getting along ?

BUONVICINI *(enthusiastically.)*

Unusually well. I have never known a wordling to do better. He carries out his duties with faithfulness and dispatch. I am generally afraid of these reformed worldings, for as a rule, they start with a flourish and end rather feebly.

SAVONAROLA

Watch Fra Benedetto carefully, for he is a marked man, and destined to go far.

BUONVICINI *(hesitatingly.)*

There's something that I'd like to say to you, but I hardly dare...

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

Surely Fra Domenico, we have been associated so understandingly for many years, that you need feel no hesitation in saying anything to me that you wish.

BUONVICINI

This is in the nature of a warning.

SAVONAROLA *(grimly.)*

Is it about the Pope ?

BUONVICINI

No, although God knows that there is grave danger threatening you from that direction. It's about the Arrabbiati.

SAVONAROLA

We have reason to feel thankful to them, for have they not helped the Piagnoni in ridding Florence of Piero de' Medici forever ?

BUONVICINI

That is just the trouble. The Arrabbiati allied with the Piagnoni for that purpose, since they hated Piero more than they hate you. But now that this danger has been removed, I fear that they will show themselves in their true colors, and take a separate and entirely hostile attitude.

SAVONAROLA *(solemnly.)*

The Lord has helped me over many deep waters, and in the face of this new danger, He will guide me.

BUONVICINI

I thought that you should know this, as we have so much to guard against.

SAVONAROLA

Triumph and tribulation often come together. The Bishop to whom the Pope gave my sermons, has handed in the following report to his Holiness.

(He picks up the document and reads.)

"Most Holy Father, this Friar says nothing that is not wise and honest ; he speaks against simony and against the corruption of the priesthood, which in truth is very great ; he respects the dogmas and the authority of the Church ; wherefore, I would rather seek to make him my friend, even were it needful, by offering him the cardinal's purple."

(He puts down the document.)

This may mean that his Holiness will stop his antagonistic attitude toward me, and already I have received his verbal permission to resume my sermons.

BUONVICINI

That is excellent. It is possible that he may offer you the cardinal's hat.

SAVONAROLA

It if were offered me in all honesty and without condition, I should refuse it, unless I found that it were my duty to accept it because of its increasing my field of utility. I should indeed be loath to give up the priorship of Saint Mark's, for the happiest moments of my life have been passed here, and I have grown to love all of my sons gathered together in this beautiful and peaceful cloister.

(A lay brother enters.)

LAY BROTHER

Worshipful Prior, a member of our order has come all the way from Rome to see you.

SAVONAROLA

Bring him hither immediately.

(The lay brother withdraws.)

What does he want ? It must be a message from the Pope. Does it mean honor or dishonor ? I trust that it be neither.

(The lay brother ushers in a Papal messenger in the habit of a Dominican, and then retires. Buonvicini leaves the room also.)

MESSENGER

Do I address the Prior of Saint Mark's ?

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

I am Fra Girolamo Savonarola.

MESSENGER

I come from the Pope and I have a message to deliver to you.

SAVONAROLA *(coldly.)*

And what is the nature of your message ?

(The messenger fumbles in his habit and pulls out a document which he hands to Savonarola, who takes it and reads it aloud.)

"To our well-beloved son, greeting and apostolic benediction. We have heard that of all the workers in the Lord's vineyard, thou art the most zealous, at which we deeply rejoice, and give thanks unto Almighty God : wherefore we desire, as behooves our pastoral office, to elevate thee to the rank of cardinal, in token of our appreciation of thy work as a vinter in the Lord's vineyard."

(He puts down the document.)

MESSENGER

His Holiness bade me urge you personally to accept this great

office, since he feels that it will increase your usefulness a thousandfold. He also bade me to suggest to you that you change the tone of your sermons...

SAVONAROLA *(springing to his feet.)*

So that's it ! I have heard that Rome makes traffic of the holiest of things, and now I have had proof of it.

MESSENGER *(soothingly.)*

Worshipful Prior, do not say anything in haste that you might regret afterwards, and take plenty of time to think the matter over, before you give me your answer.

SAVONAROLA *(in a ringing tone of voice.)*

Come to my next sermon, and you shall hear my reply to Rome.

CURTAIN

EPISODE THIRTEEN

FLORENCE, 1496

(The pulpit in the cathedral of Our Lady of the Flowers. A great throng is assembled. As the curtain rises, Savonarola mounts the steps of the pulpit. Before beginning his sermon, he pauses and gazes wistfully over the sea of upturned faces before him.)

SAVONAROLA *(preaching.)*

"How is it, O Friar, that thou hast tarried so long in idleness, without coming to the camp to the aid of thy soldiers? My children, I have not been in idleness, on the contrary, I come from the camp, and have been defending a stronghold, the which, had it been captured, you might also have been destroyed ; but now, by God's grace and through your prayers, we have saved it. Come

brother, didst thou perhaps fear to be killed ? No, my children, certainly not : for had I been afeared, I should not have come here, where I am now in greater peril than before. Then, dost thou not scruple to preach ? Not I ? But why not ? We hear that an excommunication hath been sent, and that thou hast been forbidden to preach. Hast thou read this excommunication ? Who hath sent it ? But even if it were so, rememberest thou not how I told thee that even if it came, it would be useless and of no avail to these wicked men full of deceit. What then hath happened ? Friar, thou keepest us overmuch in suspense. Now I will tell ye all, if ye hearken with patience.

"I have said and bethought me : before proceeding, *custodiam vias meas ;* that is, I will look to my ways, to see if they be pure of all contamination. Beholding so much opposition from so many parts against a poor man who is not worth three farthings, I have said in my heart, peradventure thou hast not looked well into thy ways, and, therefore, thy tongue hath betrayed thee ; and I have looked into my ways one by one. I have chiefly examined them as to faith, for with grammar and logic have I no more concern ; and certes, as regards faith, my ways are wholly pure ; for I have ever believed, and do believe all that is believed by the Holy Roman Church, and have ever submitted and do submit myself to Her. I have written to Rome, that if peradventure I may have preached or written any heretical thing, I am willing to amend me and to retract my words here in public. I am ever prepared to yield obedience to the Roman Church, and declare that whosoever obeyeth her not, shall be damned. I declare and confess that the Catholic Church will surely endure to the day of judgment ; and inasmuch as there be divers opinions as to the real definition of this Catholic Church, I rely on Christ and on the decision of the Church of Rome.

"The superior may not give any command contrary to the rules of my order. The Pope may not give me any command opposed to charity, or contrary to the Gospel. I do not believe that the Pope would ever seek to do so ; but were he to do so, I should say to him, now thou art no pastor, thou art not the Church of Rome, thou art in error. For I would even say, whenever it be clearly seen that the commands of superiors are contrary to God's command-

ments and especially contrary to the precept of charity, no one is in such case bound to obedience, for it is written : *oportet obedire magis Deo quam hominibus.* But if the case were not clear, or there were the slightest doubt, then we must always obey.

"I cannot hold myself bound to obey any one who would remove me from Florence, inasmuch as all the inhabitants, even the women, know that my removal would be desired solely from motives of political hatred, and that it would bring injury, not only to liberty but to religion. Were I to see clearly that my departure from a city would be the temporal and spiritual ruin of a people, I would obey no living man that commanded me to depart, forasmuch as in obeying him, I should disobey the commands of the Lord ; and likewise because I should presume that my superior had no intention to do evil, but had been misled by false reports. O thou that writest so many lies to Rome, what wilt thou write now ? I know what thou wilt write. What, O Friar ? Thou wilt write that I have said that one need not obey the Pope, and that I will not obey him. I say not so : write that which I have said, and thou shalt see that it will not be suited to thy purpose.

"Having examined my ways and found them to be clean, since my doctrine has always been in conformity with the Church ; and although I am convinced that the briefs sent to Rome are invalid, inasmuch as they are solely inspired by lying reports, and opposed to the law of charity, I have nevertheless resolved to be prudent, and have therefore held my tongue so far. But when I perceived that many of the righteous men were growing lukewarm, and the wicked gaining strength, and the work of the Lord being overthrown, I boldly decided to return to the pulpit. First of all, however, I sought the Lord, saying : I was rejoicing in my peace and tranquility and Thou drew me forth by showing me Thy light ; and thereupon I became even as the moth that tempted by the light, doth burn its wings. O Lord, my wings of contemplation are consumed. I have embarked on a stormy flood, assailed on all sides by contrary winds. I would fain reach the port, yet can find no track; would fain repose, yet find no resting-place ; would fain remain still and silent, but may not ; for the word of God is as fire in my heart, and unless I give it a vent, it will consume the marrow of my bones. Come O

Lord, since Thou wouldst have me steer through these deep waters, let Thy will be done.

"In ye, O young men, is my hope and hope of the Lord. The city of Florence will be well governed by ye, because ye have not the evil tendencies of your fathers, who know not how to free themselves from tyrannical rule, nor understand the greatness of this gift of liberty that the Lord hath bestowed upon the people.

"But as for ye, old men, ye pass your days in evil speaking at clubs and in workshops, and in your letters ye send forth many lies from Florence. Wherefore, many say that I have thrown Italy into disorder ; and this hath been charged against me in writing, even in official documents. O ye fools ! *Quis vos fascinavit non obedire veritati ?* Where are my hosts and my treasure with which to disturb Italy ? Not by me is Italy disturbed, but I foretell that she will be disturbed.

"I foretell that the scourge will be hastened by your sins. Thou unbelieving one, a mighty war shall strip thee of thy pomp and thy pride. A mighty pestilence shall make ye cast aside your vanities, O Women ; as for thee, thou murmuring populace, thy tongue shall be stilled by a great famine. Citizens, unless ye live in the fear of God, and love of free government, the Lord shall bring sorrow on ye, and only fulfil to your children His promise of happiness to Florence.

"*O vaccæ pingues*, tell me, how wouldst thou interpret these words ? For me these fat kine signify the harlots of Italy and Rome. Is there none in Italy and in Rome ? One thousand, ten thousand, fourteen thousand are few for Rome. There both men and women are made harlots, O people. I accuse ye of a false and hypocritical religion, for ye take satisfaction in material things only. Ye are corrupt in all things, in your speech, in your silence, in that which ye do, and that which ye leave undone, in your belief and in your unbelief. Ye speak against prophecy, and behold there cometh one to tell ye a strange dream and ye have faith in it. He telleth ye : fast on a certain Saturday, at a certain hour, and ye fast and believe that ye are saved. I tell ye that the Lord willeth not that ye fast on such a day or at such an hour, but willeth that ye avoid sin throughout all the days of your life. Instead ye are good for one hour of the day, in order to be base all your life. Observe the

ways of these men during the last three days of Holy Week. See how they go about making indulgences and pardons ! Come here, go there, kiss Saint Peter, Saint Paul, this saint and that ! Come, come, deck churches, ring bells, dress altars, come all of ye, for three days before Easter and then no more. God mocketh your doings, heedeth not your ceremonies, for Easter passed, ye will be worse than before. All is vanity, all is hypocrisy in our times. True religion is dead. How is it, if I were to say, give me ten ducats for one in need, thou wouldst not give them, but if I tell thee, spend a hundred for a chapel in Saint Mark's, wouldst thou do it ? Yea. In order to have thy coat of arms placed there, for thine own glory, but not for the glory of God. Look through all convent buildings and thou wilt find them full of their founders' armorial bearings. I raise my head to look above a door, thinking to see a crucifix, and behold there is a shield ; I raise my head again a little further on, and behold there is another shield. Armorial bearings everywhere. I don a vestment, thinking that a crucifix is painted on it ; but arms have been painted even there, the better to be seen by the people. These then are your idols, to which ye make sacrifice ?

"Fly from vice and return to Christ. Gather ye strongly in charity. Fly from Rome and come to repentance.

"Not yet hath the day come for ye to wreak your will on me. I have said unto the Lord, I leave Thee to take thought of this deed ; I am but a tool in Thy hand. And He hath answered, leave all to Me. It will be with them even as it was with the Jews, who thought to destroy Me by nailing Me on the cross, and instead did make My name known throughout the earth. Therefore, like unto a good captain, I will fight even unto death."

CURTAIN

EPISODE FOURTEEN

FLORENCE, 1496

(The facade of the cathedral of Our Lady of the Flowers. Mass being over, two beggars hurry out and seat themselves on the steps before the sortie of the congregation.)

FIRST BEGGAR

By the Holy Rood, pickin's'll be good !

SECOND BEGGAR

Why ?

FIRST BEGGAR

'Cause o' tha Friar.

SECOND BEGGAR

Whajja mean ?

FIRST BEGGAR *(rubbing his hands.)*

Didn' ja hear wot he said ? He give 'em fits he did, and they 'll be so skeered that they'll give ter keep tha Devil from gittin' 'em, they will.

SECOND BEGGAR

He's a grand man he is. He gits people. My brother Luigi who has allus been tha laziest lout in tha fambly has went ter work, 'cause o' tha Friar. He torked ter him, he did.

FIRST BEGGAR

Wot's he do ?

SECOND BEGGAR

He's a link-boy fer tha Strozzi.

FIRST BEGGAR

Tell him it's dangerous ter play with fire.

(He chuckles.)

That's an orful arm ya got.

SECOND BEGGAR *(laughing.)*

I got a noo man ter paint it. He gits a florin more, but I gits more sympathy nor I done with tha ole one. Wot's tha matter with ya hand ?

FIRST BEGGAR

I dunno. A feller tole me it was tha noo French disease.

SECOND BEGGAR

They say it's orful bad.

(People begin to come out of the cathedral.)

FIRST BEGGAR *(whining.)*

Alms, fer tha love o' Christ, alms !

(As the people pass out, coins are flung into the hats of the beggars.)

SECOND BEGGAR

Didn't I tell ya ? Tha Friar's a grand man !

(The square rapidly fills with the people, who come out of the cathedral. They stand in groups and talk and gesticulate.)

A NOBLEMAN

What did you think of the sermon, Ettore ?

SECOND NOBLEMAN

It was wonderful, Roberto, but the Friar's done for, thank God !

FIRST NOBLEMAN

What do you mean ?

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Well, you don't suppose that the Pope is going to swallow that affront ! Moreover, we Arrabbiati—

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Sssh, not so loud, the Piagnoni might hear you, and this is not the time—

SECOND NOBLEMAN

It's all right now, we can afford to come from under cover. De' Medici's done for, and we have no need to pretend further.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

I'm not so sure. De' Medici's defeat was by no means decisive. I think it best for us to dissemble a little longer. Wasn't the sermon terrible ?

SECOND NOBLEMAN

I'm against Savonarola, but I admire courage when I see it, and that sermon was the most courageous thing that I've ever listened to.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

I'll bet old Borgia's sorry that he gave the Friar verbal permission to resume his sermons.

(They saunter off at the right, making their way through the crowd.)

A NOBLEWOMAN

Did you see his eyes flash ? What did you think of the sermon, Lisa ?

SECOND NOBLEWOMAN

Magnificent ! And as ugly as he is, he looks well when he is excited. What a tremendous power he has.

FIRST NOBLEWOMAN

Yes, and it seemed as if he were answering some one. I felt very uncomfortable.

SECOND NOBLEWOMAN

It was a terrible sermon.

(They push their way through the crowd, and go off at left.)

A WASHERWOMAN *(to her husband.)*

Ugo, didja ever hear tha likes o' that ?

UGO

Naw, an tha way he give it ter all of us. He won't be long fer this worl' if he keeps on torkin' thataway. He's got guts.

WASHERWOMAN

He most skeered me ter death. Does ya think them things will happen ?

UGO

Of course, he allus tells tha truth.

(There is a great shout from the people, as Savonarola passes out of the portal of the cathedral. He walks slowly, with his head bowed, and his cowl pulled down over his face. The throng respectfully makes a lane for him, and he passes through the people without looking to the left or right.)

A PIAGNONE

Long live Savonarola !

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI

Long live Savonarola !

(There is a vast roar of applause from the majority of people present.)

AN ARRABBIATO *(aside to a companion.)*

The Friar is popular. I hope that he—

SECOND ARRABBIATO

Sssh, this is not the time—

(Ha waves his cap wildly.)

Long live Savonarola !

(From all sides come shouts and cries of approval, and Savonarola passes out at the right.)

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI

Long live Savonarola ! Long live the Republic !

CURTAIN

EPISODE FIFTEEN

VENICE, 1496

(A small room in de' Medici's house on the Grand Canal. Piero de' Medici and Cardinal Battese are seated before a great table littered with documents.)

BATTESE

The Pope's wrath knew no bounds. He became so purple that we feared for his life.

DE' MEDICI *(shortly.)*

No wonder, after such a sermon.

BATTESE

When the Archbishop of Pistoja entered the Pope's presence, he was berated roundly, and his Holiness complained bitterly because the Florentines refused to enter the Holy League for the purpose of expelling the French barbarians.

DE' MEDICI *(bitterly.)*

They hate and fear me so, that they prefer even the French.

BATTESE

Four Dominican theologians were summoned by the Pope to enquire into Savonarola's conduct and doctrines. They could only come to one conclusion, namely, that he was the author of all of your misfortunes.

DE' MEDICI *(furiously.)*

That's true, curse him !

BATTESE

His time will come.

DE' MEDICI

With the Pope for an enemy, I should say that it was here.

BATTESE

Not yet, for you underestimate the popularity of the man. He preached a sermon at Prato, before the professors of the University of Pisa, and a number of doctors were converted. And Marsilio Ficino swears by him. His sermon before the Signory in the hall of the Greater Council openly defied the Pope's wrath once more. Now all Florence turns to the Friar for advice.

DE' MEDICI

The outlook is not particularly cheerful for me.

BATTESE

There is always good with the bad. The death of Piero Capponi will have a tremendous effect on the political situation. In him Savonarola has lost one of his most powerful and most influential henchmen.

DE' MEDICI

Although this may affect Savonarola's security to a considerable extent, it will not be of much advantage to me. The Arrabbiati

are more to be feared than the Friar and his Piagnoni. I can manage either party, but I cannot withstand their combined efforts.

BATTESE

With Savonarola's fall, will come the fall of the Piagnoni, and then you will have only one party to fight.

DE' MEDICI

I am relying more on the Pope's wrath than on anything else. That is what will accomplish the destruction of the Friar.

BATTESE

For the present, luck is with Florence. The death of the Dauphin has changed French policy and has encouraged the Pope to attack Florence on his own account. But the rout of the Papal forces at the Bridge of Valiano was little short of a miracle. The Pope's wrath and his hatred for Savonarola rule him completely these days, and he is determined to crush him at all costs. That is why the siege of Leghorn was pushed. However, the Florentines held their own, and why ? Because the Friar encourages the people from the pulpit, and they actually believe that as long as his voice is heard there, no evil can befall them.

DE' MEDICI

It's miraculous ! Did you hear about the incident of the Madonna dell' Impruneta ?

BATTESE

No, what was that ?

DE' MEDICI

It was taken through the streets of Florence, and before it had gone half way through the city, a messenger arrived with the news that the long awaited reinforcements had reached Leghorn.

BATTESE

It would seem as though the finger of God were in all of this. But the Pope is still to be reckoned with, and when he acts, Savonarola will need all of the help from God that he can possibly get.

DE' MEDICI *(vehemently.)*

And Piero de' Medici will bring all of his influence and the influence of the Bigi to bear, in helping to destroy this upstart Friar!

CURTAIN

EPISODE SIXTEEN

FLORENCE, 1497

(The office of the monastery of Saint Mark. At the rise of the curtain, Savonarola and Buonvicini are seated opposite one another at a small table, whereon lies a map of Tuscany.)

SAVONAROLA

I have done my best to make it plain to him, but he will not pay any attention to me.

BUONVICINI

Capponi is a sad loss to the Republic.

SAVONAROLA

I have told him repeatedly that the Bigi and the Arrabbiati are conspiring against the Popular Party, but he will not believe me.

BUONVICINI

Francesco Valori is too impetuous to be a great Gonfalonier. Since the Council has forbidden balls and festivities, your enemies have increased in numbers.

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

You must not take the attitude of youthful malcontents too

seriously. Rudolfo Spini and his band of Bad Fellows* may provoke quarrels and commit acts of violence, but can a band of bullies really be a political menace ?

BUONVICINI

Under the new law that lessens restrictions, they can become members of the Council, and they will not hesitate to work any injury possible to the Republic. They are often recruited from the younger members of the Arrabbiati.

SAVONAROLA

That is the reason why they are not a menace. After all, is it not an old party splitting in two ?

BUONVICINI

Valori has raised the question of taxation, and this has gained many enemies from the wealthy class.

SAVONAROLA

The tax will never come into effect.

BUONVICINI

Perhaps not, but its mere agitation has caused new hatred to spring up.

SAVONAROLA *(smiling.)*

You look too much on the dark side of things, Fra Domenico. My support is stronger than you seem to realize.

BUONVICINI

I think that you have made more enemies than you realize.

SAVONAROLA

If you have any doubts concerning my strength, note the manner

*The Compagnacci. This political party caused much trouble in Florence by their acts of violence and utter lawlessness. The Compagnacci were virulent in their hatred for Savonarola, and combined with and were often recruited from the younger members of the Arrabbiati.

in which the carnival will be conducted to-morrow. The change is going to surprise the citizens of Florence. Moreover, we have had some brilliant victories lately.

(He turns to the map on the table, and traces a route with his forefinger.)

It was down this road that leads from Reggio, that the advance guard went until they reached—

CURTAIN

EPISODE SEVENTEEN

FLORENCE, 1497

(The Square of the Signory a little before sunset during carnival. In the centre of the square is a great pile of vanities that is to be set on fire as soon as darkness falls. This pyre rises in the shape of a pyramid. At its base are false beards, false hair, masquerade dresses, rouge pots, cards, dice, mirrors, perfumery, beads, trinkets, and gew-gaws of various kinds. Higher up are books, drawings, busts, and the portraits of the most celebrated Florentine beauties. At the apex of the pyre is a great effigy of King Carnival. To prevent pillage, guardsmen are stationed around the pyramid. The balconies of the houses in the square are filled with people, with the exception of the balcony of the Palace of the Signory, which is empty. The square is packed with a great throng. As the curtain rises, a great bustle and clamor are to be heard.)

A VENDOR *(to a colleague.)*

I never thunk I'd live ter see this day.

SECOND VENDOR

Wot a pile o' good things gone ter tha Devil.

FIRST VENDOR

Tha people's crazy, I tells ya.

SECOND VENDOR

Worse nor that. There's thousands o' florins in that there pile. My cousin tried ter grab a book this afternoon, and a guard cotched him, and he's in tha Bargeller now.

FIRST VENDOR

Times is changed. Ya useter be able ter kill a man 'thout as much as a wink from a guard.

SECOND VENDOR

That's right too.

(The sound of singing is heard, and a procession enters the square by the Uffizi, at the side of the Lodge of the Signory. Borne by four angels is an Infant Jesus carved by Donatello, its left hand pointing to a crown of thorns, its right raised in the act of benediction. Following the figure are men and women in white carrying scarlet crosses, and chanting hymns. Behind them come hundreds of children dressed in blue and silver. The children make for the ringhiera and the adults group themselves about the portal of the palace. As soon as the singing has ceased, the people in the square applaud vigorously.)

FIRST VENDOR

Gord ! Whatja think o' that ? Hymns and Jesuses on a carnival ! I likes wenches and stoups better.

A BIGIO *(to an Arrabbiato.)*

What is Florence coming to ?

THE ARRABBIATO

God only knows ! The cursed Friar has bewitched the town.

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI

Long live Savonarola !

(There are groans and catcalls from the members of the Bigi,

the Arrabbiati, and the Compagnacci who form, however, a small portion of the people present.)

Long live Savonarola ! Long live the Republic !

(At this there is vociferous applause from the majority of the people present.)

ARRABBIATO *(to a wench.)*

What do you think of this ?

WENCH

Kisses and wine and florins are better than the hymns of the Wry-Necks.

ARRABBIATO

Right you are my merry jade.

(He kisses her, and a guardsman who has been watching them intervenes.)

GUARDSMAN

Ya must not carry on thataway.

ARRABBIATO *(furiously.)*

Who says so ?

GUARDSMAN

Orders of the Signory.

(The Arrabbiato attempts to kiss the girl a second time, and the guardsman puts a restraining hand on his shoulder. Wild with rage, the Arrabbiato attempts to stab the guardsman with his dagger, to have the point break on a hidden tunic of mail.)

Ho, guardsmen !

A CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

What's the trouble ?

GUARDSMAN

I caught this here fellow kissing tha wench, and when I tried ter stop him, he tried ter knife me, he did.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Take them to the Bargello.

(The pair are taken off at the right, the woman, biting, kicking, and screaming every inch of the way.)

A PIAGNONE

This is the greatest day that has ever dawned for Florence.

AN ART STUDENT

God only knows what priceless treasures are in that pile.

SECOND ART STUDENT

They say that da Vinci's "Leda" is there. And I happen to know that the life studies of Fra Bartolommeo and of Lorenzo di Credi are there, for I saw them put them there myself.

FIRST ART STUDENT *(shaking his head.)*

It's a crime !

PIAGNONE *(overhearing the remark.)*

Material things are as nothing compared with the spiritual welfare of the people.

SECOND ART STUDENT

Shut up, you snivelling numbskull of a prayer-mumbler !

(Darkness sets in, and the members of the Signory in the magnificent robes of their office appear on the balcony of the palace. The buzz and murmur of the crowd are hushed, and the sound of a clarion-call is heard. Ten Dominican Friars from the monastery of Saint Mark issue from the Lodge of the Signory, carrying blazing torches. The people make a lane*

*Now the Lancer's Lodge, or Loggia dei Lanzi.

for them between the lodge and the pyre. Walking slowly and chanting the "dies iræ," they make their way to the pyre and apply the torches to the pile. The inflammable stuff at the bottom of the pyramid ignites immediately, and the flames mount rapidly. There is a great shout from the assembled multitude.)

MANY VOICES

Long live the Republic ! Long live Savonarola !

(The flames mount higher and higher.)

A MEMBER OF THE COMPAGNACCI *(to a fellow member.)*

I wish to God that the stinking Friar was where King Carnival is !

A FRANCISCAN FRIAR *(overhearing the remark.)*

He will be some day.

A BIGIO

Do you think so ?

FRANCISCAN FRIAR

Yes, curse him ! My brother who is in Rome, says that the Pope is determined to destroy him.

A PIAGNONE *(overhearing the remark.)*

Shame on you ! Savonarola is the noblest influence that Florence has ever had.

A CARTER

Shut up, prayer-squawker !

(He gives the Piagnone a mighty kick and sends him flying on his face.)

PIAGNONE *(picking himself up.)*

You are a wicked fellow !

CARTER

Ha-ha-ha !

(There are guffaws and cries of indignation, and the carter disappears through the crowd.)

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI

Long live Savonarola ! Long live the Republic !

(The pyre suddenly flares up into a blaze that lights the whole square brilliantly, and the children and the adults of the procession commence to chant a "Te deum" as the ten friars walk back slowly to the Lodge of the Signory. The people in the square bare their heads.)

CURTAIN

PART THREE

THE FALL

CHARACTERS

RODRIGO BORGIA, Pope Alexander the Sixth.
ALESSANDRO BRACCI, a Florentine Ambassador.
UMBERTO NALDI, a Bigio.
BEPPO, a Guardsman.
ALDO, a Guardsman.
A PIAGNONE.
A CAPTAIN of the Guard.
SECOND PIAGNONE.
AN ARRABBIATO.
A CARTER.
FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA.
FRA DOMENICO BUONVICINI.
FRANCESCO CEI, a Compagnaccio.
BARTOLOMMEO GIUGNI, of the Eight.
GIULIANO MAZZINGHI, of the Eight.
CORBIZZO DA CASTROCARO, a Piagnone.
FIRST HAT-VENDOR.
SECOND HAT-VENDOR.
CESARE BORGIA, Son of Alexander the Sixth.
LUIGI, an Attendant.

ALBRECHT SACHT, an Astrologer.

PIERO POPOLESCHI, Grand Gonfalonier of Florence.

FIRST MEMBER of the Twelve Worthies.

SECOND MEMBER of the Twelve Worthies.

FIRST GONFALONIER of the Companies.

SECOND GONFALONIER of the Companies.

BATTISTA RIDOLFI, of the Ten of Liberty and Peace.

GIULA, Marchioness of Corri.

MARIANO DE GENNAZZANO, of the Order of Saint Francis.

DOFFO SPINI, Leader of the Compagnacci.

FIRST COMPAGNACCIO.

SECOND COMPAGNACCIO.

THIRD COMPAGNACCIO.

FOURTH COMPAGNACCIO.

FIFTH COMPAGNACCIO.

SIXTH COMPAGNACCIO

FIRST MARKET WOMAN.

SECOND MARKET WOMAN.

FIRST ARRABBIATO.

SECOND ARRABBIATO.

FIRST VENDOR.

SECOND VENDOR.

FIRST CARTER.

SECOND CARTER.

A CHILD.

A MOTHER.

A WOMAN.

AN OLD WOMAN.

A TAVERN KEEPER.

HIS WIFE.

FIRST MEMBER OF THE SIGNORY.

SECOND MEMBER OF THE SIGNORY.

MARCUCIO SALVIATI, a Commander of Infantrymen.

Members of the Bigi, Members of the Piagnoni, Members of the Arrabbiati, Guardsmen, Rabble, Members of the Compagnacci, Congregation, Priests, Friars, Market People, Attendants, Members of the Signory, Members of the Eight, Members of the Twelve Worthies, Members of the Ten of Liberty and Peace, Clerks, Scribes, Guardsmen, Infantrymen, Dominicans, Minorites, Fra Francesco Salviati, Fra Malatesta Sacromoro, Peasants, Burgeois, Nobles, Women, Urchins, etc.

EPISODE ONE

ROME, 1497.

(A small room in the Vatican. Pope Alexander the Sixth is seated at a great table covered with papers, and Alessandro Bracci, the Florentine Ambassador, is seated opposite him.)

BORGIA *(gloweringly.)*

May God pardon the author of that expedition which has been the cause of all the woes of Italy, as your State, having been dismembered by the loss of Pisa, must be well aware. It would be worse still, if the French came again. Therefore, we are using our best efforts, as our Lord God knows, to weld the whole of Italy into one body. To effect this, we count chiefly on your sagacious wits. After great difficulty, we have induced the League to bestow Pisa on you, but only on the condition that you join with us, and act as good Italians, by leaving the French in France. And for this, we must have stronger guarantees than mere words.

BRACCI

The Florentines have always been not only good, but excellent Italians, and their simple word is the best security that can possibly

be found. Nor can their alliance with France be held to imply that they wish to do injury to any Italian potentates.

BORGIA *(angrily.)*

Bracci, you are as fat as ourself, but pardon us, you have come on a lean mission. If you have naught else to say to us, you may go back to your post at once.

But have a care, lest the Florentines be driven by force, and be made to do that which they are unwilling to do of their own accord.

BRACCI

Your Holiness, Florence is used to adversity, and rather than be driven against her will, she will resist with all her will.

BORGIA *(losing his self control completely.)*

Well we know the cause of your pride! It is the faith that Florence has in her parable-mongering friar. How long is Florence going to allow him to lacerate us, to insult us, to threaten and trample upon us, who *licet immeriti* now occupy the Holy Chair of Saint Peter?

BRACCI *(soothingly.)*

Your Holiness is completely misinformed, for Savonarola is goodness itself, and full of modesty—

BORGIA *(cutting him short furiously.)*

Talk not to us of that meddling friar! He is the arch-fiend that has caused all our woe! Get you back to your Florentine kennel and inform him and the Signory that our enmity is no trifling matter. Until Florence is ready to come to terms unconditionally, we shall have no further parleying.

(He taps a bell and an attendant enters.)

Have Messer Bracci conducted to his villa, Guido.

(The attendant bows and ushers Bracci out of the chamber.)

God's malediction on all fractious friars ! We'll rend Savonarola limb from limb and strew all Italy with his entrails, curse him !

(He grows purple with rage, and chokes. Alarmed, he taps the bell and an attendant enters.)

Wine !

Quick, wine !

(He falls to the table and the attendant rushes to a commode and pours wine from a golden pitcher into a golden goblet and gives it to him. The Borgia drinks it noisily between gasps, and recovers himself somewhat.)

ATTENDANT

Your Holiness, shall I call your physician ?

BORGIA *(speaking with difficulty.)*

No—we shall—be all right in—a moment. Send in Naldi.

(The attendant bows and retires, returning immediately and ushers in Umberto Naldi, a member of the Bigi. The attendant withdraws as Naldi bows to the Borgia still gasping in his chair.)

NALDI

Your Holiness—

BORGIA *(gasping slightly.)*

Be seated, Umberto.

(Naldi takes the seat recently occupied by Bracci.)

NALDI

Are you ill, Your Holiness ?

BORGIA *(recovering himself with an effort.)*

Just a slight indisposition. However it may be greatly alleviated by any good news that you may bring us.

NALDI *(smiling.)*

I have excellent news, Your Holiness. The Bigi are showing unusual activity and this is causing great anxiety to the friends of

the free government of Florence. Moreover, the state of affairs in Florence is rapidly becoming propitious for definite action on the part of the Bigi. Food is scarce, and consequently very dear, and the city is filling rapidly with famine-stricken rustics who go about the streets begging. Many diseases have broken out, of which the worst is the plague, and the hospitals are full.

BORGIA *(chuckling.)*

Your report coincides with that of Fra Mariano Gennazzano who hates our arch enemy as much as we do.

NALDI *(laughing.)*

And he has sufficient cause. Savonarola put his nose out of joint years ago. But the determining factor in our favor is that the Piagnoni and the Arrabbiati are at daggers drawn. Due to their differences of opinion anent the Friar, Florence is a house divided against itself. For this reason we have succeeded in electing Bernardo del Nero to the post of Grand Gonfalonier, and as your Holiness knows, he is a strong de' Medici man.

BORGIA *(banging on the table delightedly.)*

That is the best news yet !

NALDI

As your Holiness knows, he either desires a Medician restoration or a restricted government in Florence. The Bigi have not been able to conceal their delight, and have lit bonfires in the streets—

BORGIA *(snarling.)*

Most unwise ! At this juncture they should keep their cards concealed.

NALDI

De' Medici is beside himself with joy over the news.

BORGIA *(scornfully.)*

He is a sorry figure on which to hang our hopes.

NALDI

I hear that he has made no good impression in Rome.

BORGIA

No ! He leads a scandalous and degrading life here, doing little else than eating and drinking and passing his time with courtesans, loose fellows, and feather-brained companions, and making a commotion in our streets. He spends his time and strength in every description of unnatural vice. We are merely favorable to his cause on account of the Friar.

NALDI

Del Nero thinks that he should wait a little longer before he permits de' Medici to make his attempt to reënter Florence.

BORGIA

We have succeeded in procuring for him the services of one Bartolommeo d'Alviano, a captain of great promise, who commands over a thousand men.

NALDI *(shaking his head.)*

It is too early.

BORGIA *(angrily.)*

Now is the time or never ! Petrucio who is supreme in Siena is well disposed to assist de' Medici. On his march to Florence, he can rest there and reorganize his men. Remember that the success of the Bigi means the death of the Arrabbiati and the Piagnoni.

NALDI

And Piero's failure means the death of the Bigi.

BORGIA *(emphatically.)*

The Bigi will succeed, for the time is ripe !

CURTAIN

EPISODE TWO

FLORENCE, 1497

(The San Pier Gottolini Gate, one mile from Florence. Great crowds of people are grouped about it, and in the distance, the bells of the city are heard ringing furiously. As the curtain rises, Beppo, a guardsman, is seen talking with Aldo, another guardsman. Troops of Arrabbiati and Piagnoni and guardsmen are marching continuously through the gate, toward the open country. The sound of canon is heard very faintly.)

BEPPO

And ter think but fer that yokel, we might have been killed in our beds !

ALDO

He got away from Piero and come across country. Tha Signory lost no time in sounding th' alarm and tha Arrabbiati and tha Piagnoni will do tha rest.

BEPPO

If Piero wins, Gord help tha Friar !

ALDO

He ain't agoing ter win. Del Nero's defending the city which is pretty good fer a Bigi.

BEPPO

He couldn't do nothing else.

(There is a sound of shouting, as fresh troops of guardsmen march through the gate.)

GUARDSMEN *(shouting as they march.)*

Down with the balls ! Down with the balls !

(This cry becomes fainter and fainter and finally dies away in the distance. The sound of the cannon becomes louder and louder. The bells of the city stop ringing.)

ALDO *(enthusiastically.)*

Them's tha boys wot'll pull tha guts out o' de' Medici !

BEPPO *(laughing.)*

He'll be sorry he ever left Rome, he will ! This is a grand day fer tha Friar.

(The sound of the cannon is heard much nearer than before.)

By Gord, tha Medici's here !

ALDO *(chuckling.)*

Well, didja think that he would attack Florence by staying in Rome, ya fool ?

(A great crowd of Piagnoni, some of them well armed, and others merely armed with sticks and stones, enters at the left on the run, and passes through the gate at double quick time.)

PIAGNONI *(shouting as they run.)*

Down with the balls ! Down with the balls !

(This shout is heard more and more faintly, until it dies away in the distance.)

BEPPO

Curse tha luck ! We has orders ter stick here, and we'll miss all tha fun !

(A Piagnone enters at the left, and is about to go through the gate, when he is stopped by Beppo.)

Wait a minute friend, wot's tha noos from Florence ?

PIAGNONE

There's hell to pay. As soon as the alarm was sounded, fighting broke out in the streets between our men and the Bigi. The Arrabbiati sided with us, so the Bigi got the worst of it. They are on their way here now to rush the gate.

ALDO *(excitedly.)*

Who's going ter defend it ? Does tha Signory think that Beppo and me can hold it against tha Bigi ?

PIAGNONE

Of course not ! Members of the Piagnoni and the Arrabbiati have been detailed to defend this sortie, as soon as the guards and the allied parties pass through.

(All the time, great numbers of men are passing through the gate, some dragging small cannon, others, carts loaded with shot and kegs of powder and other paraphernalia of battle. A troop of cavalrymen enter at left and pass through the gate.)

There go the last of them now.

(A mounted Captain of Guardsmen enters, and stopping his horse, motions to Beppo. Beppo salutes and then goes to him.)

CAPTAIN *(to Beppo.)*

You and the other guard remain here and hold the gate. Allow no one to pass out or come in. Reinforcements will arrive immediately. Bar the gates.

(Wheeling his horse, he dashes through the gate, and Beppo and Aldo start to bar it.)

PIAGNONE

Let me through.

(He goes out and Beppo and Aldo bar the gate.)

ALDO

I hopes ter Gord that them reinforcements arrives soon.

(Before he has ceased speaking, a great many Piagnoni and Arrabbiati enter. They are armed with lances, swords, staves, pikes, billhooks, cobbles, and many kinds of home-made weapons. Their leader approaches Beppo.)

LEADER OF THE PIAGNONI

We are here to defend the gate from egress or ingress of any kind whatsoever.

BEPPO *(chuckling.)*

Gord, what kind o' languages does ya call them ? I takes it that ya means that nobody can't git in or out o' tha gate. Wot's tha latest noos from Florence ?

LEADER

Arrigucci of the Signory sent Benivieni to Savonarola to find out what would become of the city, and the Friar told him that de' Medici would obtain no success.

BEPPO *(enthusiastically.)*

Then everything's all right ! Tha Friar knows, he does.

LEADER

The fighting in the streets was something terrible. Entirely too many of our men have been lost that way.

(The rattle of musketry is heard, and it is much nearer than before. The space about the gate fills rapidly with reinforcements for its defense.)

MANY VOICES

Down with the balls ! Long live the Republic !

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI

Long live Savonarola !

MEMBERS OF THE ARRABBIATI

Long live the Republic ! Down with Savonarola !

AN ARRABBIATO *(to a Piagnone.)*

Take that, you dirty Prayer-Mumbler !

(He strikes at him with a stick, and the Piagnone retaliates by driving his dagger through the man's throat, whereupon he falls to the ground and gurgles out his life. At this, two others, members of the opposing factions are about to engage in combat, when Aldo grasping the situation at a glance, rushes over to them and separates them by a vigorous use of his pike.)

ALDO

Ya fools ! Ain't we got enough on our hands ter-day, 'thout starting grudge-rumpuses between us ?

A LEADER OF THE ARRABBIATI

The guardsman's right, we must stick together until Piero de' Medici's kicked to hell !

A LEADER OF THE PIAGNONI

That's right ! Long live the Republic !

PIAGNONI *(as one man.)*

Long live the Republic !

ARRABBIATI *(as one man.)*

Long live the Republic ! Down with the balls !

(All present cheer wildly, and hats, helmets, staves, pikes, etc., are thrown into the air. The rattle of musketry is heard again, and this time it is almost at the gate doors.)

ARRABBIATI AND PIAGNONI *(as one man.)*

Down with the balls ! Long live the Republic !

(The fighting beyond the gate is so near by this time, that the cries of the hand-to-hand combatants are plainly heard.)

A CARTER *(to Beppo.)*

Lemme git out and jine tha fun !

BEPPO

No one gits out nor comes in, them's my orders.

CARTER

Dam ya orders !

(He and others are about to rush the guardsmen and open the gate, when the cries of the approaching Bigi are heard coming nearer and nearer.)

VOICES OF THE BIGI *(in the distance.)*

De' Medici ! De' Medici !

ARRABBIATI AND PIAGNONI *(as one man.)*

Down with the balls ! Long live the Republic !

(The Bigi rush in from the left, and a terrific hand-to-hand combat ensues. Many men fall in the scrimmage. Beyond the gate is heard the sound of an even more terrible fracas. The fight within the gate increases in fury, and on all sides the various cries of the opposing factions are heard, mingled with the grunts of the combatants, and the howls and groans of the dying and wounded. Aldo and Beppo are all over the place at once, and doing the work of ten men with their heavy pikes. Aldo, engaged with three men at one time, slips, and is about to be killed, when Beppo, seeing his plight, wards his assailants off, until his comrade can regain his feet. Jumping up, Aldo sends two of the men flying, and Beppo accounts for the third.)

ALDO *(panting.)*

It's lucky fer me ya was there, or I'd be with me daddy in heaven by this time !

BEPPO *(chuckling.)*

I ain't so sure about that.

(The fight within and without is at its height. Suddenly the Bigi crumble and fall back before the onslaught of the Arrabbiati and the Piagnoni.)

BIGI

Quarter ! Quarter !

(The opposing factions fight more doggedly than ever, the Bigi falling at a great rate.)

ARRABBIATI

Down with the balls !

PIAGNONI

Long live Savonarola !

(The Bigi fall back and are swept off at the left. In this final phase of the fighting, Beppo receives a thrust from a dagger

that wounds him mortally. He reels to the ground, as Aldo crushes the head of his assailant with his pike, killing him an instant too late.)

ALDO *(kneeling at Beppo's side.)*

Ya ain't hurt much, is ya, ole comrade ?

BEPPO *(faintly.)*

All that I needs, Aldo. I ain't long for this world now.

(Aldo opens Beppo's doublet, and sees a great, gaping wound.)

ALDO

Gord ! Ain't there sum'p'n I can do ?

BEPPO *(very faintly.)*

Put ya arm under my shoulder. I don't likes ter go out in tha dark all alone.

(Aldo slips his arm gently under Beppo's shoulder. The noise of the fighting beyond the gate ceases suddenly, and the cry ; "Long live the Republic !" is heard.)

That means we has won. Tha Friar's a great man.

(Very feebly.)

I seen him tha first time he come ter Florence. And I says ter him, I says : Gord pleasure ya, Father. His eyes was so sad.

(He sits up suddenly.)

Long live Savonarola !

(He falls back dead, and Aldo weeps bitterly. Outside the gate, the joyous cries of the Arrabbiati and the Piagnoni are heard. Suddenly, there is a great battering at the gate doors.)

VOICES *(from beyond the gate.)*

Open ! Open ! Victory ! Victory ! Long live the Republic ! Long live Savonarola !

CURTAIN

EPISODE THREE

FLORENCE, 1497

(Savonarola's cell in the monastery of Saint Mark. Buonvicini and Savonarola are engaged in earnest conversation, the former seated, and the latter walking up and down.)

BUONVICINI

It is a great victory.

SAVONAROLA *(sadly.)*

Beyond a doubt, but it bodes no good for Florence.

BUONVICINI *(astonished.)*

Why ?

SAVONAROLA

Because the results, far-reaching though they be, will work against rather than for Florentine liberty.

BUONVICINI

It is the death-knell of the hopes of de' Medici.

SAVONAROLA *(excitedly.)*

But do you not see that it plays directly into the hands of the Pope ?

BUONVICINI

I thought that the Pope was behind de' Medici.

SAVONAROLA

Had de' Medici won, the Pope would have found some means of getting rid of him. Now the Bigi are out of the way, and the new elections have given the Signorial offices to the Arrabbiati who are now free to oppose the Piagnoni without Bigi intervention.

Degli Alberti, the new Gonfalonier, will throw all of his influence against the Piagnoni. And with this end in view, he has already combined with Doffo Spini, the depraved leader of the Compagnacci. As I came here on my way from the Podestá, I found insulting placards affixed to the wall of the monastery, and Maruffi reports that the Compagnacci disturbed matins to-day by their riotous behavior, and insulted the congregation on its way to prayers.

BUONVICINI

I have always said that the Compagnacci would become a serious menace.

SAVONAROLA

Due to Papal intervention, the Signory talks of stopping all sermons in the churches after the fifth of May. The excuse given, is the approaching summer heats, and the continuance of the plague. Betting is going on in the streets as to whether I will or will not preach on Ascension Day. Fra Benito reports that the Compagnacci have defiled the pulpit of the cathedral with unmentionable filth and have draped it with the skin of a three days dead ass. Furthermore, he reports that spikes have been driven into the ledge upon which I often strike my hand in the heat of discourse. These events are most significant. With the Piagnoni and the Arrabbiati opposed to one another, anything may happen to undo the reforms I have striven so hard to accomplish.

There has been too much fighting as it is. The streets are filled with the corpses of the recent fracas, and already Florence is in a precarious condition from pestilence and poverty. I am far from satisfied with the trend of events. Several friends have visited my cell to-day and have implored me not to risk my life by preaching the Ascension sermon in the cathedral.

BUONVICINI

Have you agreed not to ?

SAVONAROLA

No fear of man shall induce me to deprive the people of their sermon on the day appointed by the Lord to His Disciples for going to spread His doctrines through the world.

BUONVICINI

Then we must sharpen our weapons of defense.

SAVONAROLA

Were the opposition merely in Florence, the matter would not be difficult. But the Pope becomes more and more determined to crush me.

BUONVICINI

What is to be done ?

SAVONAROLA

I have not decided upon a course as yet. The Lord has guided me past many steep places, and I have implicit faith in His will. The Piagnoni have been instructed to cleanse the pulpit of every scrap of filth for Ascension Day.

BUONVICINI

Are you not risking your life by preaching there ?

SAVONAROLA

My life is such a little thing, so utterly unimportant. But my work is not yet done, and as long as there is work for me to do in the Master's vineyard, I can have no thought for my personal safety. I shall preach on Ascension Day. The matter is in the hands of God.

CURTAIN

EPISODE FOUR

FLORENCE, 1497

(The interior of the cathedral of Our Lady of the Flowers. The church is crowded. The Compagnacci, richly dressed, perfumed, and carrying themselves in a manner of extreme defiance and insolence, stand apart. The Piagnoni, who are in the majority, conduct themselves soberly and reverently. As

Savonarola mounts the steps of the pulpit, there is a murmur from the Compagnacci, but this subsides almost immediately.)

SAVONAROLA *(preaching.)*

"Faith is all-powerful and can overcome every obstacle, and lead us to contemn earthly things by assuring us of the heavenly life. The times predicted are now at hand. The hour of danger hath come ; and now it shall be manifest who is truly with the Lord. The wicked thought to prevent this sermon today ; but they should know that I have never shirked my duty through fear of man. No mortal upon earth, be he great or small, can boast of having hindered me from fulfilling my office. O Lord, deliver me from those foes who brand me as a seducer ! Deliver my soul, since for my body I fear not. I shall call the Lord, the Virgin, the angels, and the saints to witness that all things predicted by me are revelations from God, revelations granted me by Divine inspiration during vigils endured for the sake of this people that now plotteth against me.

"To those of ye who are faithful, I say that ye lose heart too easily, and are sad when ye should rejoice ; now your tribulations are at hand ; ye will be warred against by excommunications, by the sword, and by martyrdom ; the days of trial are come ; and God grant that I be the first to endure them. I have already announced that I shall have to support great ingratitude, and that the lukewarm will do unto me even as Joseph's brethren did unto him, when they sold him to the merchants of Egypt. The lukewarm cry that I am no prophet ; yet they do all things to fulfil my prophecies. I tell ye again that Italy will be devastated by barbarian hordes ; and when these shall make peace among themselves, destruction after destruction will befall this powerful land. But ye that are righteous offer your prayers, and the Lord shall give ye succor. Now as to the wicked—

(Loud murmurs from the Compagnacci present are silenced by the Piagnoni with great difficulty.)

"Lord be Thou not angered with them, convert them, for they know not what they do. Ye wicked ones, ye think to combat the

Friar, and ye thereby make war on the Lord ; for I fight ye not from hatred to yourselves, but for the love of God. Ye say that I sow discord ; but the Lord Christ Himself came to bring strife among men. Why return ye not to virtue, for then peace shall be with ye ? O Friar, thou shouldst not have preached when forbidden by the Signory. That is not true ; nor may I refrain from preaching from fear, or by command of man. I shall keep silent only when my preaching may do hurt, or I may fear that scandal may come of it."

(Francesco Cei, a Compagnaccio, hurls an alms box to the pavement. At this signal, the doors of the cathedral burst open with a crash that resounds through the building ; and many people take to flight. A confusion and uproar ensue, and the Compagnacci yell and beat on the benches, while others bang on the doors. Many of the panic-stricken people attempt to escape, to be caught in the crush. Screams and cries are heard on all sides, and many persons faint. A number of the members of the Piagnoni force their way to the pulpit in order to protect Savonarola.)

CEI

Down with Savonarola !

MEMBERS OF THE COMPAGNACCI

Down with Savonarola !

A PIAGNONE *(to a companion.)*

Let us fetch weapons from the houses of Tosinghi and Cambi.

SECOND PIAGNONE

The quickest way is by the portal that opens on the Via del Cocomero.

(These two collect a number of Piagnoni and force their way through the crush toward the door.)

SAVONAROLA *(trying to make himself heard.)*

"Ah, the wicked refuse to hear their fate ! Wait ! Have patience !

(He raises a crucifix on high.)

"Trust in this, and fear nothing."

(Seeing that no one heeds his words, he kneels in prayer. There is a roar, as about sixty Piagnoni, armed with swords and lances, enter the church.)

SOME MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI *(in alarm.)*

The Arrabbiati ! The Arrabbiati are upon us !

(The confusion becomes terrific and the surge of people in various directions becomes so intense that it is impossible to move forwards or backwards. Women scream in their terror and many of them faint. The armed Piagnoni push their way to the pulpit and guard its steps.)

GIUGNI *(to Mazzinghi.)*

Let us push our way to the pulpit and rid Florence of this damned friar for good and all.

MAZZINGHI *(to Giugni.)*

It is dangerous to try to get there.

GIUGNI

Who would dare molest members of the Eight ?

(They force their way to the pulpit which is well guarded by this time, and find the way barred.)

MAZZINGHI *(furiously to an armed Piagnone.)*

Make way ! We would have speech with the friar.

PIAGNONE

No man may approach him.

GIUGNI *(beside himself with rage.)*

Who dares to stay a member of the Eight ?

PIAGNONE

Corbizzo de Castrocaro who fears God more than he fears the Eight !

(Giugni makes a threatening gesture and de Castrocaro knocks him down with the butt of his lance.)

GIUGNI *(picking himself up.)*

You will pay dearly for this !

(He and Mazzinghi walk off. By this time the cathedral is almost emptied, save for the armed members of the Piagnoni, and a few others. Savonarola rises from his knees and descends the steps of the pulpit.)

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI *(joyfully.)*

Long live Christ ! Long live Savonarola !

(They brandish their swords and their lances, and the unarmed members wave their crosses. Savonarola, surrounded by this body-guard, advances slowly down the aisle of the now empty cathedral.)

SAVONAROLA *(to the Piagnoni.)*

"The longer the Lord stayeth His hand, the more heavily and severely will He smite each one according to his works. The wicked refuse to believe, refuse to hearken ; but they will fall into the pit they have dug for others ; they are undermining the foundations of a wall that will crush them as it breaks. Now I will sing praises unto the Lord, and joyfully depart this life."

CURTAIN

EPISODE FIVE

FLORENCE, 1497

(A stall in the Old Market, on which the shovel hats of the period are piled. As the curtain rises, two hat-vendors are engaged in earnest conversation. About them is the roar and bustle of the market, to which they are completely imperivs.ou)

FIRST VENDOR

She say's ter me, she says : "I aint agoin' ter stand fer it," so I ups and hits her with a broom, an' that's tha last I seen or heerd of her since.

SECOND VENDOR

I allus says that tha man wot don't take nawthin' from a wench, is tha one wot gits along. Tha more ya give in ter a bitch, tha more ya has ter give in. I ain't got no time for wenches myself, as I likes politics.

FIRST VENDOR *(chuckling.)*

Then things must be a-goin' ter ya likin' these here days, fer I ain't never seed tha like of it afore. Between tha Compagnacci and the Arribbiati and tha Piagnoni life goes hummin' along. How does ya stand ?

SECOND VENDOR

I'm a Piagnone.

FIRST VENDOR

So'm I. I ain't one fer religion and friars as a rule, but tha Friar has did a orful lot fer Florence, and tha poor folks.

SECOND VENDOR

That's jus' tha way I feels about it too. Savonarola is tha biggest man Florence has ever saw.

FIRST VENDOR

Or likely ter see either, fer that matter.

SECOND VENDOR

Didja know that tha Pope's excommunicated him ?

FIRST VENDOR

Yes. But wot fer, I can't make out.

SECOND VENDOR

Well, they says in my quarter that he cast a spell on tha Pope so that tha mice ran out o' his ears.

FIRST VENDOR

I've allus said that tha Friar was a smart man. He could do it too if he wanted ter.

SECOND VENDOR

I heerd th' excommunication read in church, and torches was lit and a lot o' little bells rang, and when tha priest finished readin, tha lights went out, and it was very impressive. In tha paper wot tha priest read, it said that tha Pope had heerd that Savonarola was saying things ter hurt simple souls—

FIRST VENDOR

Wot tha Hell does tha Pope know about simple souls, tha whore-mongering ole bastard ?

SECOND VENDOR

Don't interrup' me. Tha priest then read that tha Friar was excommunicated, and that any one wot had anything ter do with him from then on, was excommunicated too. It's raised hell in tha city. Things has gone back ter tha ole ways. Dirty songs is sung in tha streets, and tha wenches is as bad as they was before tha Friar come. Tha taverns is filled and things is just like they was in tha days o' Lorenzer. Things had went too far, afore tha Friar took a hand, and I'm sorry ter see 'em slump back again.

FIRST VENDOR

Wenches is good, and songs is pretty, and wine is merry ; but I don't know but wot I agrees with ya. Tha Signory's defendin' him, and he ain't shot his last arrer yet, not by no means. Tha Pope's in a bad mess hisself since tha murder of his eldest son, and that's goin ter need a lot o' hushin' up. 'Sides tha Friar's work in this noo outbreak o' tha plague's made a lot o' noo friends fer him from among his enemies.

SECOND VENDOR

It's funny how all them things wot he foretells, comes ter pass. I heerd his bring-out-ya-dead sermon, and we ain't done nawthin' else fer these last ten days, 'cep' bring out tha dead.

FIRST VENDOR

Tha more I thinks of it, tha surer I feels that the Friar ain't done yet, not by a damn sight.

SECOND VENDOR

More power ter him, says I.

FIRST VENDOR

Me too ! I ain't any better nor I oughter be ; but any fool can see wot good he has done ter Florence.

SECOND VENDOR

Excommunication or no excommunication, I'm fer tha Friar, first, last, and always !

CURTAIN

EPISODE SIX

ROME, 1497

(A room in the Vatican. The Pope is seated in an arm-chair before a large mirror. At his side is a small table with papers on it, and near him, facing the mirror, is another arm-chair. The Pope is reading a document, as Luigi, an attendant, ushers in Naldi.)

NALDI *(bowing.)*

Your Holiness—

BORGIA *(looking up from the document.)*

Oh, Umberto ! We thought—what's the news from Florence ?

NALDI

Exciting.

BORGIA *(snarling.)*

Good or bad ?

NALDI

Very bad, Your Holiness, I told you—

BORGIA *(snarling.)*

No post mortems, Umberto. You were right, that's all there is to it !

(Bitterly.)

That is what comes from having a weakling at the head of an expedition.

NALDI

Your Holiness, there is no doubt but that de' Medici was not the man, but the way the Florentines resisted—

BORGIA *(raging.)*

More of the machinations of the accursed Friar ! We'll get—how does he take excommunication ?

NALDI

It has made the Signory stand by him, and—

BORGIA

We may have been hasty in that decision. But it's too late to retract now. Umberto, we are eager for the news of the conspiracy.

NALDI

What have you heard ?

BORGIA *(impatiently.)*

Merely rumors, tell us all that you know of the matter. Be seated.

(Naldi sits down.)

NALDI

It has stirred up Florence more than anything that has happened since the revolution of ninety-four. After the discovery of dell'

Antella's letter to Francesco Gualterroti, a free pardon was offered dell' Antella if he would confess. After some torture, he did this, and to such effect that all of de' Medici's schemes, and the names of his adherents were revealed. The twenty citizens charged to try the case found the following citizens guilty, namely : Bernardo del Nero, Giannozzo Pucci, Lorenzo Tornabuoni, Giovanni Gimbi, and Niccolo Ridolfi.

BORGIA *(chuckling.)*

It will take a brave body of citizens to pronounce sentence on these men, all of whom belong to such powerful Florentine families.

NALDI

Exactly, and for that reason, the Eight backed out of rendering a decision. The Grand Gonfalonier Bartoli, submitted the case to the Greater Council, but as this was also protested, the Signory called a meeting of the citizens. This was attended by the sixteen Gonfaloniers of the Companies, the Twelve Worthies, the Ten of War, the Eight of Guard, the Officers of the Monte, the Conservators of the Law, the Captains of the Guelf Party, the Senate, a Council of Eighty, and the Signory. This assembly voted death and confiscation of property by the State. The famous juristconsult Guitandonio Vespucci suggested an appeal from the verdict to be made before the Greater Council, and after much debate and disorder, the matter was adjourned.

The discord in the palace spread through the town, and for a time it looked as though there might be a fresh revolution. Finally it was decided that a right of appeal against the sentence of the Eight could be sanctioned by law, since the people were absolute lords of the Republic—

BORGIA *(snarling.)*

There speaks the Friar !

NALDI

The debate in the house became so hot, that the Gonfaloniers of the Companies threatened to display their banners and lead the people to demolish the houses of all those opposed to the execution

of so just a sentence as was the death of the conspirators. Naturally there was a great uproar and confusion in the hall.

In the midst of the din, Francesco degli Albizzi shouted that justice must be done. The debate went on and on. The members of the Signory were for moderation, and it looked as if they would get their wish by wearing down their opponents. But the debate was again changed to a tempest, when Francesco Valori cried out in a rage that justice must be done, or a revolt would be the consequence. In the end, the Signory was so intimidated, that a vote for death was carried.

BORGIA

All this popular nonsense comes from one source, the meddling Friar !

NALDI

At the eleventh hour, the condemned were led through the hall, barefooted and in chains, in hopes of stirring up pity for them. But all in vain. The five met death with great fortitude.

BORGIA *(picking up a document.)*

The Signory had the audacity to send us this.

(He reads.)

"The whole city has been united against these traitorous and parricidal citizens, whose execution was desired by even their own kin. And it is now to be hoped that the State may be sound and healthy for a time, since all are bent on extirpating every other evil growth of the same kind. God have mercy on the souls of those men, for as traitors to their country, they are verily in sore need of His aid."

(He replaces the document on the table.)

All of which is the rankest hypocrisy. Fra Mariano de Gennazzano is here in Rome, an exile ; but he is fortunate to have escaped with his life, having been privy in the attempt. He tells us that the man behind the whole thing, is the Friar.

NALDI

Much as I hate Savonarola, I know this to be false, for he has remained within the cloister throughout the entire fracas, as he is

proof reading his new book which is called "The Triumph of the Cross."

BORGIA

Nevertheless, he has been instrumental in the matter. The power of the Bigi is now at an end, and we must look for other means of exterminating this meddlesome friar.

NALDI

Is there anything further that Your Holiness wishes to know anent this matter ?

BORGIA

No.

(Naldi rises.)

We have an important mission for you in Lombardy, that will keep you some weeks at the court of the Sforza. When we have settled all the plans, we shall send for you. This will be sometime to-morrow, probably. We wish you to give this to Frà Mariano.

(He hands Naldi a letter which he takes, and bowing, retires. The Pope sits silent and lost in a brown study, when his son, Cesare Borgia, enters. His degenerate face is of the coldly sensual type, the cruel mouth and weak chin being hidden by a chestnut beard and moustache. He is dressed in tunic, doublet, hose, and shoes of plum-colored velvet shot with white. Without speaking to the Pope, he seats himself in the great chair facing the mirror.)

And how is the Duke of Valentinois to-day ?

CESARE *(smiling.)*

Very well, thank you.

BORGIA

And to what do we owe the honor of this visit ?

CESARE

I am concerned about your health. After your indisposition of the other day—

BORGIA *(testily.)*

You need not have any concern for our health. It improves or becomes worse, according to the fortunes of that Florentine parable-mongerer.

CESARE

Are his fortunes good or bad at present ?

BORGIA *(grimly.)*

Good, entirely too good.!

CESARE

I have a new astrologer, a fellow I picked up in the French camp. He is truly wonderful. Let me send for him and find out what he has to say anent the fortunes of this Friar.

BORGIA

Send for him.

(He taps a bell and an attendant enters.)

CESARE

Luigi, send to my apartments for Albrecht Sacht.

(The attendant bows and retires.)

The man is truly wonderful, father—

BORGIA *(angrily.)*

How many times must we tell you not to call us father ? Either address us as uncle, or Your Holiness. Since the death of the Duke of Gandia, we must be particularly cautious.

(Luigi enters with the astrologer who is an old man dressed in a long black velvet robe with the signs of the Zodiac embroidered on it in gold. He wears a tall black hat on which are pasted Arabian characters. He bows low to the Pope and to Cesare, and Luigi goes out, closing the door after him.)

CESARE

Albrecht, his Holiness desires to know the fate of a certain Florentine friar.

ASTROLOGER *(bowing.)*

I foretell all future events. Your Holiness will never die a violent death as long as he carries on his person, a box containing the Blessed Sacrement.

BORGIA *(shortly.)*

We are not interested in our death, but we wish to know how long one Girolamo Savonarola has to live.

ASTROLOGER *(pointing.)*

If Your Holiness will look into that mirror, Savonarola will appear, and walk across and back as many times as he has years to live.

(The astrologer stands by the mirror into which Borgia and his son gaze spellbound. The image of Savonarola appears and walks across and back once, and then fades.)

He has one year to live, Your Holiness.

BORGIA *(shouting in glee.)*

That is the sweetest thing that we have heard in a long time !

(He fumbles in his robes, and pulling out a handful of florins gives them to the astrologer who bows low as he takes them.)

What will be the manner of his death ?

ASTROLOGER

Look in the mirror.

(The image of Savonarola appears again, and he is hanging in chains and surrounded by clouds of smoke.)

BORGIA

The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small.

(He rises from his chair and walks toward the door.)

Will you stroll with us in the garden, Cesare ?

CESARE

No thank you, Your Holiness, I would ask this good astrologer some questions.

(The Pope leaves the room.)

What will be the manner of the death of His Holiness ?

ASTROLOGER

Look in the mirror.

(The mirror reflects the images of three men seated at a magnificently decorated table heaped with the choicest viands. These men are : Rodrigo Borgia, Cesare Borgia, and Cardinal de Corneto.)

CESARE

That's Corneto !

(A servant passes them a box of sweetmeats from which they serve themselves and eat liberally, and the scene fades.)

Are you sure that he is poisoned ?

ASTROLOGER

Look in the mirror.

(The mirror reflects the image of the Pope lying in death, his body so hideously swollen and black that it scarcely has a semblance of human form. The picture fades away.)

CESARE *(fearfully.)*

Do I die as well ?

ASTROLOGER

Look in the mirror.

(The mirror reflects the images of Cesare and his sister, Lucrezia playing chess in the apartments of the former, and then the scene fades away.)

CESARE

By what is he poisoned ?

ASTROLOGER

Look in the mirror.

(In the mirror appears the reflection of Cesare Borgia concocting something in a copper saucepan over a slow fire of charcoals, and the picture fades away.)

CESARE

Good God, it's la Cantarella ! Surely I do not kill him ?

ASTROLOGER

Look in the mirror.

(The mirror shows Cardinal de Corneto giving a heavy purse to a man and then the picture fades away.)

CESARE

Corneto giving a purse to the head carver of the Vatican ! Treason ! I must warn His Holiness.

(Suddenly he flings himself back in his chair, and laughs and laughs, as though he were laughing at some great jest.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE SEVEN

FLORENCE, 1498

(A room in the Palace of the Signory. Grouped about a table are several members of the Signory, including the Grand Gonfalonier Piero Popoleschi, Battista Ridolfi of the Ten, several Gonfaloniers of the Companies, several of the Twelve Worthies, and several members of the Ten of Liberty and Peace.)

POPOLESCHI

So unless we take measures to silence the Friar, the city will be put under an interdict.

FIRST WORTHY

I have always said that it was a mistake to allow that man to resume his preaching, after he had been excommunicated.

FIRST GONFALONIER OF THE COMPANIES

Has the Pope sent any written message ?

POPOLESCHI *(picking up a document and reading.)*

"On first receiving notice of the pernicious errors diffused by that child of iniquity, Girolamo Savonarola, we required him to abstain entirely from preaching, and to come to Rome to implore our pardon and make recantation ; but he refused to obey us. We commanded him under pain of excommunication to join the Congregation of Saint Mark to the new Tusco-Roman Congregation, and again he refused to obey, thus incurring *ipso facto*, the threatened excommunication. The which sentence of excommunication we caused to be pronounced and proclaimed in your principal churches, likewise declaring that all who heard or addressed, or held intercourse with the said Fra Girolamo would also incur the same penalty. Nevertheless, we now hear, that, to the grave hurt of religion and the souls of men, this Friar still continues to preach, despises the authority of the Holy See, and declares the excommunication to be null and void. Wherefore, we command you, by your duty of holy obedience, to send the said Fra Girolamo to us, under safe custody, and if he return to repentence he will be paternally received by us, inasmuch as we seek the conversion, not the death of a sinner. Or at least put him apart, as a corrupt member, from the rest of the people, and keep him confined and guarded in such wise, that he may have speech of none, and not be able to disseminate fresh scandals. But if ye refuse to obey these commands, we shall be forced to assert the dignity and authority of the Holy See, by subjecting you to an interdict and also to other and more effectual remedies."

(He puts down the document.)

Now it seems to me that only one course of action is open to us, and that is to obey the Pope.

SECOND WORTHY

If we should lay hands on the Friar, the whole city would be in a tumult. Let the Pope understand this, and let us endeavor to appease his wrath in some other manner.

SECOND GONFALONIER OF THE COMPANIES

There is only one way to appease the wrath of the Pope, and that seems to be the surest way of stirring up the people against us.

POPOLESCHI

Gentlemen, I have said all along that the Friar's form of popular government could only end in disaster. In the days of the illustrious, and very much lamented Lorenzo, Florence was much better off than it is now.

RIDOLFI *(springing to his feet.)*

Speaking for the Ten of Liberty and Peace, I concur in the opinion of the illustrious Grand Gonfalonier. Florence is worse off than it has ever been before. Our enemies are increasing daily ; the Venetian fleet is nearing the port of Leghorn ; the dearness of provisions and the disorganization of the troops would prevent us from taking the field on any emergency. Leghorn, a most important position as regards supplies, merchandise, and artillery, stands in great need of repairs, which we cannot afford to make. Volterra, which should be well garrisoned, is left defenceless ; the adjacent hills are abandoned, and would fall into the hands of the enemy at the first attack. Pescia and its valley are exposed to the foe... Throughout the district above Vagliano, which is another important place, constables, commissioners, and soldiery are all clamoring for money. The Pisans are already making raids on Maremma, and the plague does the rest.

(He sits down.)

POPOLESCHI

Let us send this Friar to the Pope immediately and wash our hands of the whole matter.

RIDOLFI *(springing to his feet.)*

Unfortunately the latter is not disposed of so easily. Although we are of the opinion that we should avoid a quarrel with the Pope, we must look to the honor of God and the Republic ! Consequently it behooves us to investigate thoroughly the Pope's statements,

and ascertain whether his complaints be just or not ; to find out if that which he ordains be for good or ill. Undoubtedly the Friar is a man of virtuous life and great learning, who has never caused any evil in Florence and has always rendered good service both in spiritual and in temporal matters. Wherefore, if the Pope be opposed to his deeds owing to false information, let all be made clear to him in writing at once ; but if the affair stands on a different footing, then our sole care is to uphold the honor of the city. Letters from Milan assure us that the Pope has suddenly changed his mood, and has become hostile to the Republic, not only on account of the Friar's sermons, but for other reasons, one of them being his desire to overthrow the Florentine government. Hence our replies should be brief and easy. The expulsion of the Friar from Florence would cause serious disturbances throughout the city. As a sign of obedience to the Pope, let us inform him that we shall forbid the Friar to preach in the cathedral until further notice.

(He sits down and Popoleschi rises.)

POPOLESCHI

I have here a transcript of the Friar's last sermon which I shall read in part.

(Ridolfi directs a scribe to write something for him, as Popoleschi commences to read.)

"To declare that the Pope can do no wrong, is the same as to say that neither the Christian as a Christian, nor an ecclesiastic as an ecclesiastic can do any wrong. As individuals, the Pope, the Christian, and the ecclesiastic are equally liable to error. A Pope cannot err, when merged in his office, and when he errs he is no Pope, and if he issues a wrongful command, it cannot be held to proceed from the Pope. O Friar, the Pope is God upon earth, and Vicar of Christ ! That is true, but God and Christ command us to love one another and to do good ; wherefore, if the Pope command thee to do some deed opposed to charity, if thou obey, then thou wouldst grant more to the Pope than to God ! The Pope may be led into error not only by false reports, but sometimes also from hatred to charity, like unto Pope Boniface the Eighth who was a bad Pope,

and to whom the Evil One said ; 'I will that thou destroy this order of preaching friars '; who began like a fox and died like a dog. Our Order hath often fought and withstood Popes who sought to do evil. Do we not hold a proof of it now ? If I desire to forsake religion and to do evil, a bull is soon granted me, and full licence ; but to do good, no sanction is allowed. And the cause of all this corruption of the Church is the temporal power. When the Church was poor, she was holy ; but when the temporal power was conferred upon her, then her spiritual power was cast down : she was overwhelmed in the dust of riches and wordly things, and began to be puffed up with pride."

(He puts the document down.)

This man must be stopped from preaching at all costs, or else he will bring destruction upon us through the combined efforts of the mightiest potentates of Italy.

(He sits down.)

RIDOLFI

If we banish this Friar, the danger of destruction from within, is greater than the danger of destruction from without if we do not banish him.

(He takes a document from a scribe.)

I have had this answer to the Pope drawn up, and I shall read it for your approval.

(He reads.)

"We, the Ten of Liberty and Peace, are unable to obey the commands of your Holiness, not only because, in obeying them, we should act unworthily towards our Republic, and unjustly toward one who has deserved well of his country ; but also because, even if we had the will, we lack the power to obey, without exciting popular dissensions and placing many persons in danger thereby ; such and so great is the favor won by this Friar's integrity. We are surely pained that these matters should have turned the heart of your Holiness against us, and that you now deprive us of the hopes you formerly held to, touching the material welfare of our Republic. Nevertheless, we shall continue to maintain our wonted allegiance

to the Church and the Catholic faith, only premising that the good of our Republic is nearer our hearts than the convenience of others."

(He puts the document down.)

I suggest that we forward this letter to our ambassadors in Rome, together with one from the Signory, so that the Pope may be acquainted with the desires of the—

CURTAIN

EPISODE EIGHT

ROME, 1498

(A room in the Vatican. The Pope, the Marchioness of Corri, and Cesare Borgia are seated at a table engaged in conversation.)

GIULIA

No, Cesare you...

CESARE *(haughtily.)*

I am the Duke of Valentinois to my acquaintances.

GIULIA *(laughing.)*

You are Cesare to me, and always will be, for I have known you ever since you were a tiny little boy, and a particularly bad one you were too. And from the look of you, you haven't changed much.

BORGIA *(snarling.)*

Come, come, stop your wrangling! We have important things to discuss.

GIULIA

What a nasty tempered old man you are getting to be, Rodrigo. You always seem to be in the very devil of a humor.

BORGIA *(sulkily.)*

We wonder how you would behave if you were pestered to death by a meddlesome Friar ? Why doesn't Umberto come ?

(He taps a bell, and an attendant enters.)

Bring Messer Naldi here as soon as he arrives.

(The attendant bows and retires.)

What an embroilment this fractious Friar has caused !

GIULIA

I have always thought that you have taken the matter too seriously.

BORGIA *(raging.)*

Ridiculous ! The Holy See is not to be impugned by him, to say nothing of ourself.

GIULIA

If less attention had been paid to the matter, the whole affair would have blown over as a nine days' wonder.

BORGIA *(sneering.)*

We suppose Giulia that you would have managed the matter with far greater capability than ourself ?

GIULIA *(giggling.)*

That would not have been very difficult.

(The Pope is about to reply furiously, when the attendant ushers in Umberto Naldi and Fra Mariano de Gennazzano and withdraws.)

BORGIA

Good evening, gentlemen, be seated. What is the news from Florence ?

GENNAZZANO

Always the same, trouble, and more trouble.

(He and Naldi seat themselves.)

NALDI

The Signory—

BORGIA *(interrupting furiously.)*

Has written us a wicked letter ! We have told their ambassadors that we shall bring ruin upon Florence.

GENNAZZANO

Piero de' Medici is offering heavy bribes to all who will assist him in being restored.

BORGIA *(contemptuously.)*

He is a broken reed !

GENNAZZANO *(sighing.)*

I fear so, Your Holiness.

CESARE

Venice and Milan are trying to force Florence to join the League.

BORGIA

Unless the Florentines cease to protect this Friar, who is throwing the whole Church into confusion, we are determined to lay them under an interdict.

NALDI

Armed men attacked Bonsi's house here, and ill will is growing daily, as the Romans become more bitter toward the Florentines.

BORGIA

We have told the Signory repeatedly that if they would let the Friar come to Rome, all would be ended.

GIULIA *(laughing.)*

Would you have him strangled in the Castle of Saint Angelo ?

(Cesare gives her a black look, but the Pope takes no notice of the remark.)

NALDI

The Signory has condemned Savonarola to silence, and some of his warmest adherents are growing cool. He has even begun to attack the election of Your Holiness, having written to various European courts that it is null and void.

BORGIA *(gleefully.)*

We are already aware of this, thanks to the loyalty of various persons to whom he entrusted his missives.

(With satisfaction.)

This gives us the most powerful weapon that we have had against him so far, and we shall use it, never fear. What other news do you bring us ?

NALDI

That is all up to the present.

BORGIA

Then we must get the Arrabbiati to work to the undoing of the Friar.

(The Pope taps a bell, and an attendant enters.)

Luigi, tell our major domo that he is to serve a repast for five in half an hour.

(The attendant bows and retires.)

GIULIA

What babies men are, how stupid and short-sighted !

BORGIA

What do you mean ?

GIULIA *(laughing.)*

The Bigi have failed. The Compagnacci have failed, and the Arrabbiati will fail. What is this Friar's power ? Why his hold over the people of course ! That is why the Signory persistently refuses to comply with your repeated requests, Your Holiness. Find some means to undermine Savonarola with the people.

BORGIA

Which means ?

GIULIA *(rising and mockingly making a deep curtsey.)*

Why that is for your four great intellects to find out !

(Laughing, she jumps up and rushes from the room, and the four men exchange significant glances.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE NINE

FLORENCE, 1498

(A banqueting room in a palace, where members of the Compagnacci have just banqueted. As the curtain rises, they are seen carousing at the table, the repast ended, but the wine still flowing like water. They are dressed in silken attire, the costumes of the group forming the colors of the spectrum. From right to left, the colors of the costumes are ; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The various shades are so arranged that they merge into one another without discord. The Compagnacci are on one side of the table, so that the prismatic effect is complete. All of them are in a roaring good humor, and many of them intoxicated.)

SPINI *(raising his glass.)*

To Umberto Naldi, whilom Bigio, now a good Compagnaccio who braves the Borgia in his papal lair !

THE COMPAGNACCI *(raising their glasses.)*

Long live Umberto Naldi !

(They drink with much shouting.)

NALDI *(rising.)*

I drink to Doffo Spini, the most ferocious hater that the Friar has, after the Borgia !

(All drink to Spini with great gusto.)

A COMPAGNACCIO

Tell us how you love the Friar, Doffo.

(Spini rises, his eyes blazing.)

SPINI

Our dear Friar, whom we all love so well, is at last within the power of honest men. All the attempts that I have made upon his life have been frustrated, for his body guard of admirers have stuck to him too closely for Spini's sting.

(He shows his teeth, and pulls a long dagger half way out of its sheath, snapping it back ferociously.)

But even a miracle-worker can't last forever. Our good Naldi—

(He bows to Naldi, who returns the salutation.)

So recently joined us, brings us a message of comfort from the Pope, namely, that the only way to get rid of the Friar, is to undermine him with the people. Even before we had received this message, we had come to this conclusion ourselves. Will the Compagnacci back me to a man in undermining this Friar with the people ?

(Loud cries of assent are heard on all sides.)

Then the time is ripe ! Popoleschi and Berlinghieri are doing their uttermost to effect a change in the government. Rome and Milan have been informed of this, and they are also helping in the matter. Of course, all of this is excellent, but something has happened that will put Savonarola within our power.

(Shouts of approbation are heard on all sides.)

Messer Naldi, as the latest member of the Compagnacci, and as an emissary from the Pope, will tell us what has happened.

(He sits down and Naldi rises.)

NALDI

Gentlemen, a certain Fra Francesco di Pulgia of the Order of Saint Francis—

A COMPAGNACCIO *(interrupting.)*

He's the man who's giving the Lenten sermons in the church of the Holy Cross, and he has gone after Savonarola with singular vehemence—

MANY VOICES

Silence ! Don't interrupt !

NALDI

He has stigmatized him as a heretic, a schismatic, and a false prophet, and has challenged him to prove the truth of his doctrines by an ordeal or trial by fire. Heretofore, Savonarola has always refused such challenges.

SPINI

The dirty trickster hasn't the courage to accept !

NALDI

And he has always treated them with contempt, believing it to be beneath his dignity to reply to them.

A COMPAGNACCIO

He hasn't the guts to try it !

NALDI

Fra Domenico Buonvicini is now preaching in Savonarola's place, since the latter has been silenced by the Signory.

A COMPAGNACCIO *(slightly intoxicated.)*

'Ray for the Signory ! Good ole Signory !

NALDI

And considering himself personally challenged, since he is preaching in his master's place, Buonvicini has published his "Conclusions"

and has declared that he is willing to go through ordeal by fire, if the Minorite challenger will do the same.

(He sits down.)

A COMPAGNACCIO

I don't see how this affects Savonarola, if Fra Domenico is the one to enter the fire.

SPINI

Of course it does.

COMPAGNACCIO

How ?

SPINI

If Savonarola's champion enters the fire, he will be burned undoubtedly. If he refuses to enter the flames, he and the Friar will be discredited. We can keep the Minorite champion away from the fire on one pretext or another until discredit has fallen upon Savonarola and the Dominican champion. As soon as Savonarola has lost credit with his followers, we shall find an opportunity to rouse a tumult, and during this fracas we shall have the chance to kill the Friar. It's all very simple.

A COMPAGNACCIO

This is all very pretty in theory, but no crack-brained friar is going to be inveigled into thinking that he can walk through fire, and if he did, no one would take him seriously.

SPINI

You don't know the Wry-Necks. They can believe anything.

A DRUNKEN COMPAGNACCIO *(singing.)*

"Oh," said a silly ole friar :
"A miracle-worker I'll be.
It's perfectly easy to walk through the fire,
And easy to walk on the sea !"

No, no, you silly ole friar,
No miracle-worker you'll be.
If a man has got bladders on both of his tootsies,
Why shouldn't he walk on the sea ?

(This song meets with a roar of approval, and is sung over by all present.)

SPINI

There'll be no difficulty in arranging this ordeal. We'll have Buonvicini's "Conclusions" transcribed by a government notary and obtain the signatures of all who wish to maintain or contest them by trial by fire. The Signory will be glad to aid us, for Savonarola has become a burden, thanks to the combined attacks of the Pope and other Italian potentates. We'll get the champion into the fire, killing him in the flames, or discredit him so that Savonarola is killed with the people. One way is equally as good as the other.

A COMPAGNACCIO

Suppose he passes through the flames safely ?

SPINI *(laughing.)*

There's not a chance of such a thing. Things like that do not happen nowadays. *(He lifts his glass.)*

Long live the Compagnacci !

(The Compagnacci rise as one man and lift their glasses.)

THE COMPAGNACCI *(as one man.)*

Long live the Compagnacci ! Down with Savonarola !

(They drink, and then give a great shout.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE TEN

FLORENCE, 1498

(Savonarola's cell in the Monastery of Saint Mark. Buonvicini and Savonarola are engaged in earnest conversation.)

SAVONAROLA

I think that you have been hasty in the matter, Fra Domenico.

BUONVICINI *(enthusiastically.)*

I am all-eager for the ordeal, and I shall emerge triumphantly.

SAVONAROLA

The members of the Signory have been shameless in having consented to it. By so doing, they have degraded their office. It is a plot to trap us.

BUONVICINI

I think that it will prove to be our salvation. We shall get back many who are now siding against us. It may even change the heart of the Pope.

SAVONAROLA

It is an ecclesiastical affair, and not political. Girolamo Rucellai is correct in saying that entirely too much fuss has been made over it. The Signory and the Eight want to be rid of me at any cost, and hope that this will turn the people against me. It has been decreed that I am to be banished if a Dominican perishes. And if you and Fra Giuliano are consumed, the Dominicans alone are to be punished. The whole matter is a diabolical plot where party passions are disguised under a semblance of religious zeal.

BUONVICINI

I am not afraid to face this ordeal. Have you not often said that your words would be confirmed by supernatural evidence ? And

is not this the test ? It is more likely that the Lord will perform a miracle to confound the Arrabbiati and the diabolical Compagnacci. If you should force me to retract now, which is within your power to do, the effect upon the city would be terrific. Too many of the lukewarm among the Piagnoni have fallen away, and those who are faithful, are anxious for this ordeal to come to pass. We shall go through the fire unscathed and confound our enemies.

SAVONAROLA

Although I exult in your zeal, Fra Domenico, and know you to be a faithful and holy servant of Christ, supernatural signs and tokens must be vouchsafed by the Lord, and not at the command or the pleasure of men.

BUONVICINI

The Lord has appointed me to do this work. Moreover, it has been decreed by the Signory that I and Fra Giuliano are the champions chosen by common accord. If I succeed, the triumph of our cause is established and the freedom of the Florentine people is made certain. The Minorites cannot succeed, for they have not entered into this ordeal through any spirit of righteousness, but merely as weak tools in the hands of the Arrabbiati and the Compagnacci. Have no fear, for the Lord is always on the side of the righteous.

SAVONAROLA

Perhaps you are speaking with an authority that is beyond earthly authority and with a reasoning that transcends mortal reasoning, Fra Domenico. If this be true, I have no right to stop you. Go then, as the champion of righteousness, and God be with you.

(He lifts his hand, and Fra Domenico kneels as Savonarola blesses him.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE ELEVEN

FLORENCE, 1498

(The Square of the Signory crowded with people, and guarded by the Guards of the Signory. On the "ringhiera" is erected a platform with seats for the members of the Signory which remains empty throughout the whole scene. The Lodge of the Signory is divided by a partition, the half nearest the palace to be occupied by the Minorites, and the other half by the Dominicans. In the portion to be occupied by the Dominicans, an altar has been placed. In front of the Lodge, three hundred infantrymen are drawn up under the command of Marcucio Salviati. At the opposite side of the square several hundred members of the Compagnacci fully armed, are under Doffo Spini. In front of the palace are five hundred Guards of the Signory who also command every egress and ingress to the square. A great platform runs from the centre of the square toward the Lodge of the Signory, and is composed of earth, bricks, and clay, with bundles of wood placed on top of it, forming a lane of about four feet in width. The wood is covered with gunpowder, oil, pitch, and resin, so that it may be ignited easily. The windows, balconies, and roofs of the houses are thronged with spectators. Children are clinging to railings and walls, or are perched on statues, in order to witness the sight. As the curtain rises, it is late morning. The spectators who fill the square have been there since daybreak.)

A MARKET WOMAN

Holy Jesus, all Florence must be here !

SECOND MARKET WOMAN

Why don't sum'p'n happen ? I've been here since sunrise and I'm all wore out !

FIRST MARKET WOMAN

Well, ya don't see no friars wadin' through flames every day ! Ain't ya got no patience ?

AN ARRABBIATO *(to a companion.)*

This is the greatest day that ever dawned for Florence. Where are the Piagnoni ?

SECOND ARRABBIATO

There aren't as many as there used to be. The Friar has lost a lot of his followers lately.

FIRST ARRABBIATO

Rats always desert a sinking ship.

(There is the sound of singing in the distance, which rapidly comes nearer and nearer.)

MANY VOICES

Here they come ! Here they come !

(Mace-bearers enter the square, followed by a Dominican carrying a huge crucifix. Directly behind these, is Fra Domenico Buonvicini arrayed in a fiery red cope. He carries a small crucifix in his hand, and with him are a deacon and a sub-deacon. Behind him comes Fra Girolamo Savonarola who is carrying the Host. On one side of him is Fra Francesco Salviati, and on the other, Fra Malatesta Sacromoro. He is followed by the Dominicans from the monastery of Saint Mark, and behind these come a procession of Piagnoni bearing lighted torches, and chanting the sixty-eighth Psalm : "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered." The friars and the Piagnoni enter the square two by two and the Piagnoni already in the square, join in the singing so vigorously that the earth is almost shaken. The Compagnacci and the Arrabbiati are silent. These, however, raise a great cry, as a few Minorites enter the square and make for their side of the Lodge of the Signory. When the singing ceases, Buonvicini and Savonarola enter

their half of the Lodge, the latter placing the Host on the altar. Fra Domenico kneels down and commences to pray earnestly. The few Minorites stand on the steps of the Lodge, and seem utterly indifferent.)

A VENDOR

Where's Francesco della Puglia ?

SECOND VENDOR

Giuliano Rondinelli ain't showed up neither.

FIRST VENDOR

I'll bet he's scared ter go through tha fire.

SECOND VENDOR *(laughing.)*

Well, I don't blame him none, neither. Here comes a feller from tha Signory.

(A member of the Signory, in gorgeous robes of office, passes through the portal of the palace, and making his way to the Lodge, talks with Savonarola. At his words, which are unheard on account of the murmur in the square, Fra Domenico trembles with rage, and the member of the Signory reënters the palace.)

FIRST ARRABBIATO

What happened ? Did you notice how angry Fra Domenico became ?

(The second Arrabbiato whispers something to the First Arrabbiato, and a broad grin spreads over the face of the latter.)

So that's it ! A clever game, I call it !

A CARTER

Why don't they begin ?

A PIAGNONE *(to a companion.)*

Why don't they commence ? I've been here since daybreak.

SECOND PIAGNONE

I can't understand it !

A COMPAGNACCIO *(shouting.)*

Come on Friar, show us how a Dominican waddles through hell unscathed !

(There is a roar of laughter at this sally from the members of the Compagnacci.)

FIRST PIAGNONE *(to second Piagnone.)*

The Compagnacci are the spawn of the Devil himself.

A CHILD *(to its mother.)*

I'm hungry, gimme sum'p'n' ter eat.

MOTHER

Not now Tito, wait a little.

CHILD

When does it begin ?

MOTHER

Very soon now, Tito.

CHILD

I wanna go home.

A PIAGNONE *(shouting.)*

Let the ordeal start, for the hour is late !

MANY VOICES *(impatiently.)*

Begin, begin !

A COMPAGNACCIO

Come on Friar, show us a miracle !

MANY VOICES

A miracle ! A miracle !

(Piero degli Alberti of the Signory comes out of the palace portal and whispers earnestly to a guardsman. The guardsman nods, and degli Alberti re-enters the palace.)

GUARDSMAN *(shouting.)*

Savonarola has cast a magic spell over the cope of Fra Domenico.

THE COMPAGNACCI *(roaring as one man.)*

A devilish trick, no such advantage can be allowed !

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI *(shouting.)*

Its' a lie ! It's a lie ! The Friar is a holy man !

A COMPAGNACCIO

Make him change his cope !

THE COMPAGNACCI *(as one man.)*

Make him change his cope !

A PIAGNONE

Let the ordeal start !

MANY VOICES *(impatiently.)*

Begin ! Begin !

THE COMPAGNACCI *(as one man.)*

Make him change his cope !

(Savonarola and Fra Domenico talk earnestly, and suddenly the latter flings off the cope, and stands in the habit of a Dominican.)

A COMPAGNACCIO

His habit may be enchanted too !

THE COMPAGNACCI *(as one man.)*

Make him change his habit.

MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI

Begin ! Begin ! We have been here since morning !

CHILD *(wailing.)*

Mother, I'm hungry.

MOTHER

Wait a little, Tito.

(To an old woman.)

I never thought of bringing food.

OLD WOMAN

Neither did I, for I thought the ordeal would be over early.

SECOND ARRABBIATO *(to first Arrabbiato.)*

See, it's working nicely.

(He points to Fra Domenico who is entering the palace in order to change his habit. The friars commence to sing a hymn.)

SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE COMPAGNACCI *(shouting.)*

That is to cast a spell over Rondinelli !

(The Compagnacci raise such a din, that the sound of the singing is drowned.)

Long live Fra Giuliano Rondinelli !

A PIAGNONE *(to a companion.)*

The Compagnacci are behaving disgracefully. Why does not the ordeal commence ?

(Fra Domenico emerges from the palace and reënters the Lodge. He is garbed in a different habit.)

A COMPAGNACCIO

Don't let him go near the Friar, he might re-enchant him.

MEMBERS OF THE COMPAGNACCI

Keep him away from the Friar !

(At this, Fra Domenico suffers himself to be surrounded by the Minorites.)

A PIAGNONE

Begin ! Begin !

A TAVERN KEEPER *(disgustedly to his wife.)*

I thought that this here was all nonsense.

WIFE

Sssh !

MEMBERS OF THE ARRABBIATI *(furiously.)*

Begin, you snivelling Wry-Neck !

HUNDREDS OF VOICES

Begin ! Why don't you begin ?

(There is a great murmuring in the square as the people grow more and more impatient. Savonarola looks at the palace portal anxiously, and Fra Domenico commences to fidget. The murmur grows into a roar, the Compagnacci and the Arrabbiati leading in the protest. The Guardsmen of the Signory rattle their pikes.)

CHILD *(to its mother.)*

I wanna go home ! I'm hungry !

MOTHER *(to old woman.)*

I can't wait any longer. Curse the Friar !

(She and the child push their way through the throng and are lost to sight. The curtain falls, and rises immediately to show a lapse of time. Now the people in the square are in a roaring, seething tumult of rage. The Arrabbiati, the Compagnacci, and even some of the Piagnoni are shouting imprecations, and shaking their fists at Savonarola who stands in the Lodge of the Signory, pale, calm, and silent. Fra Domenico sits on the steps, with his head in his hands, and the very picture of dejection. Suddenly he jumps to his feet, and snatching a lighted torch from a Piagnoni, rushes toward the platform. He is stopped by several infantrymen who persuade him to resume his seat on the steps of the Lodge.)

A CARTER *(to a companion.)*

Nawthin' but disputes all day long ! I've never seed tha like of it !

SECOND CARTER

Tha Friar's a damned hypocrite !

MEMBERS OF THE COMPAGNACCI *(in unison.)*

Wry-Necks, Wry-Necks,
Your Friar is a liar,
Throw him in the fire !

(This song is immediately taken up by the throng in the square and sung several times.)

MEMBERS OF THE ARRABBIATI

Throw him in the fire !

MANY VOICES *(shouting.)*

The Friar is a liar,
Throw him in the fire !

(At this, there are many catcalls, hoots, hisses, blasphemies, yells, and bursts of ribaldry. Some of the rabble begin to fling stones into the Dominican's side of the Lodge, to be stopped immediately by the infantrymen.)

Yah ! Bah ! Wry-Neck ! Liar ! Hypocrite ! False prophet ! Anti-Christ !

(While this is going on, a heated dispute takes place between Savonarola and a member of the Signory who has entered the Lodge.)

A PIAGNONE *(to a companion.)*

It seems to me that the Friar should have gone into the flames.

SECOND PIAGNONE

I think so too.

(The sun sets, and a member of the Signory appears on the balcony of the palace, and raising his hand, silences the clamoring people.)

MEMBER OF THE SIGNORY

O People, due to the lateness of the hour, and to the delay caused by the unwillingness of the Dominican to face the ordeal, it is now impossible that the trial by fire shall take place.

(He is joined by another member of the Signory. Now the rage and disappointment of the people transcend all bounds, and their clamor mounts to a roar.)

MANY VOICES

Death to the Friars ! Down with Savonarola ! Liar ! False prophet ! Death to the Friars ! Down with Savonarola ! Anti-Christ ! Down with Savonarola !

MARCUCIO SALVIATI *(to an under officer.)*

There's going to be trouble now, guard the friars !

(The infantrymen surround Savonarola, Buonvicini, and the friars of Saint Mark's, as the armed members of the Compagnacci make a rush for them.)

SOME MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI

Down with Savonarola !

(The infantrymen have great difficulty in keeping the mob away from Savonarola and Fra Domenico. These two and the other friars of Saint Mark's are swept off the scene by the protecting soldiers, and the people, including many of the Piagnoni, pelt them with stones, dung, faggots, or whatever else they may find to hand. The roars and yells of the infuriated mob, as it follows the friars on their way to the monastery, grow fainter and fainter, and the square is left empty, even the people on the roofs and the balconies having left their places to follow the mob, save for the two members of the Signory who remain on the balcony of the palace. They listen to the ever-diminishing roar of the mob, until it has died away almost completely.)

FIRST MEMBER OF THE SIGNORY

That is the end of the Friar !

SECOND MEMBER OF THE SIGNORY

And a good thing too.

FIRST MEMBER

He was a good man.

SECOND MEMBER *(laughing.)*

Yes ! That was the trouble. Florence has no place for good men.

FIRST MEMBER

That's right ! They would keep the world from wagging on. A clever plot !

SECOND MEMBER

And a very successful one.

(Very faintly in the distance is heard the cry : "Down with Savonarola ".)

FIRST MEMBER *(nodding his head with satisfaction.)*

A thoroughly successful one !

CURTAIN

PART FOUR

THE MARTYRDOM

CHARACTERS

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA.
FRA BENEDETTO BETTUCCIO.
FRA SILVESTRO MARUFFI.
FRA FRANCESCO DE' MEDICI.
FRA LUCA DELLA ROBBIA.
FRANCESCO DAVANZATI, of the Piagnoni.
FRA DOMENICO BUONVICINI.
FRA ENRICO.
FRA MALATESTA.
A DYING FRIAR.
FIRST MACE - BEARER.
SECOND MACE - BEARER.
A PIAGNONE.
A COMPAGNACCIO.
AN ARRABBIATO.
A CARTER.
A CARTER.
A VENDOR.
GIAMBATTISTA GIUSTINI, Head Torturer of the Bargello.
ERCOLE RUFFO, Assistant Torturer of the Bargello.
THE BISHOP OF VASONA.

FRANCESCO ROMOLINO, of the Apostolic Commission.
GIOVACCHINO MAZZINGHI, of the Eight.
DOFFO SPINI, of the Eight.
SER CECCONE, a Notary.
A GAOLER.
A BURGHER.
FIRST GUARDSMAN.
SECOND GUARDSMAN.
A WOMAN.
A VENDOR.
A BEGGAR.
A CHILD.
A MOTHER.
AN OLD WOMAN.
A SOLDIER
FIRST NOBLEMAN.
SECOND NOBLEMAN.
A GIRL.
MEMBERS of the Arrabbiati.
MEMBERS of the Compagnacci.
A CUTTHROAT.
A PROSTITUTE.
ANOTHER PROSTITUTE.
A DOMINICAN FRIAR.
FIRST KITCHEN WENCH.
SECOND KITCHEN WENCH.
FIRST FRANCISCAN FRIAR.
SECOND FRANCISCAN FRIAR.
THE GRAND GONFALONIER OF FLORENCE.
A BYSTANDER.

AN EXECUTIONER.
A TINKER.
A CARTER.
ENRICO, a Guardsman.
BICCI, a Guardsman.

Friars, Piagnoni, Arrabbiati, Compagnacci, Guardsmen, Soldiers, Rabble, Minorites, Franciscans, Carthusians, Capuchins, Scribes, Notaries, Members of the Eight, Members of the Apostolic Commission, Members of the Signory, Members of the Bigi, Nobles, Women, Noblewomen, Vendors, Thieves, Priests, Officials, etc.

EPISODE ONE

FLORENCE, 1498

(The Greek Library in the monastery of Saint Mark. All the volumes have been removed and a number of friars are standing quietly near a window giving on the Square of Saint Mark. The great doors of the room are open, and beyond them is heard the clatter of wheels, as a well-loaded handcart is pushed into the room by several members of the Piagnoni, among whom is Francesco Davanzati. As the cart enters the room, Fra Silvestro Maruffi and Fra Francesco de' Medici rush up to it.)

DE' MEDICI *(to Davanzati.)*

What's the news ?

DAVANZATI

Baldo Inghirlami is bringing a few faithful followers to assist in the defense of the monastery.

(Fra Luca della Robbia and Fra Benedetto join the group.)

DELLA ROBBIA

What's happened ?

DAVANZATI

The very Devil's to pay. The Compagnacci pelted Fra Mariano with stones when he tried to preach in the cathedral. All of the

windows of Andrea Cambini's house have been broken, and the Compagnacci are gathering to storm the monastery. The citizen Pecori was murdered as he was about to enter the church of the Annunciation, and for no worse crime than that of having sung a psalm. The Compagnacci and the Arrabbiati are on their way here, after having had a fight with the Piagnoni in the Square of the Cathedral. Many on both sides have been killed.

FRA BENEDETTO

Then we must prepare to defend the monastery at once. Fra Silvestro, help me to distribute the weapons that Davanzati has brought us.

(He and Fra Silvestro Maruffi turn to the cart and commence to unload it, many friars lending a hand. A dozen breastplates and helmets, eighteen halberts, six crossbows, and six shields of various sizes are distributed, together with several harquebusses. Two small mortars are dragged to the windows and mounted, and a barrel of powder and several cases of shot are divided between them. Several of the friars put on the helmets and breastplates over their habits, while others brandish the pikes and other weapons. Savonarola enters the library, accompanied by Fra Domenico Buonvicini.)

SAVONAROLA *(sternly.)*

What is the meaning of this ?

DAVANZATI

Worshipful Prior, the Arrabbiati and the Compagnacci are on their way to attack the monastery.

(Through the windows comes the distant sound of fighting, and the cries : "Death to the Friars !", and "Down with Savonarola !", are faintly heard. A number of Piagnoni under Baldo Inghirlami enter the library. They are well armed and go at once to the group of friars to await the arrival of the attacking parties.)

MANY VOICES *(from without.)*

Down with Savonarola ! Death to the Friars !

SAVONAROLA *(raising a cross.)*

Since this has come to pass, suffer me to go forth.

SEVERAL FRIARS *(earnestly.)*

Do not leave us, Worshipful Prior, if you leave us, what will become of us ?

(They kneel at his feet in supplication. The shouts of the mob are heard outside.)

MANY VOICES *(from without.)*

Death to the Friars ! Down with Savonarola !

MARUFFI

You will be torn to pieces, and what will become of us without you ?

(Savonarola is about to pass through the doors, when his way is barred by Davanzati, della Robbia, and others. Seeing that they will not let him go, he raises a crucifix, and all present kneel down.)

SAVONAROLA

Then let us go into the church and pray. Bring me the Host, Fra Benedetto.

(All rise from their knees, and Fra Benedetto rushes into the corridor.)

MANY VOICES *(from without.)*

Down with Savonarola ! Death to the friars !

A VOICE *(from without.)*

Come out, O craven Friar !

MANY VOICES *(from without.)*

Down with Savonarola ! Death to the friars !

(Fra Benedetto returns carrying the Host, which he gives to Savonarola.)

SAVONAROLA

Into the church, my children. Let us pray.

(Carrying the Host, he goes out, the friars and Piagnoni following him. The room is left empty.)

MANY VOICES *(from without.)*

Come out, O craven Friar! Death to Savonarola!

(A great stone crashes through the window, striking a statue of the Virgin standing in a niche.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE TWO

FLORENCE, 1498

(The Greek Library of the monastery of Saint Mark at the end of the day's fighting. The doors leading to the cloister have been broken down, and the window-frames of the windows that look out on the square have been knocked in. As the curtain rises, Fra Domenico Buonvicini is giving Holy Communion to a dying friar.)

BUONVICINI

"Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful."

(The friar manages to swallow before he falls back dead in the arms of Buonvicini. The lurid blaze of the burning monastery comes through the broken doorway, casting a shaft of light on the two friars. In the corridor, the sound of the clashing of arms and the yells of the fighters are heard. Many figures are seen swaying back and forth in the heat of the fighting beyond the doorway.)

VOICES *(from without.)*

Death to the friars ! Down with Savonarola !

VOICES OF THE PIAGNONI *(from without.)*

Long live Christ ! Down with the Arrabbiati ! Down with the Compagnacci !

(In the library, many dead friars and Piagnoni are lying about, some in the fighting postures in which they were killed. One of the mortars has been put out of commission, while the other, manned by Fra Silvestro Maruffi and Francesco Davanzati, is being fired as rapidly as possible. The friars and the members of the Piagnoni are fighting fiercely with the members of the Arrabbiati and the Compagnacci who are continually pouring into the room. Fra Enrico is doing the work of five men with his halbert, and Fra Benedetto is doing his share with his harquebuss. The grunts and cries and curses of the straining combatants raise an infernal din.)

FRA BENEDETTO *(as he crushes the skull of a Compagnacci.)*

Long live Christ !

(He engages with three men, keeping them off with the butt of his harquebuse. A fourth man, a Compagnacci, sneaks up behind him, and is about to make an end of him, when Fra Enrico crushes his head with his halbert.)

FRA ENRICO *(shouting.)*

Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine !

(Suddenly reinforcements of Piagnoni sweep into the room and the fight rages more fiercely than ever. The few friars defending the library raise a cry of joy. Fra Silvestro Maruffi rushes from the room, and his gun is manned immediately by a Piagnone.)

FRIARS AND PIAGNONI *(shouting.)*

Long live Christ !

COMPAGNACCI AND ARRABBIATI *(shouting.)*

Death to the friars ! Down with Savonarola !

(A friar is run through the breast by the sword of an Arrabbiati. He is dragged to the side of the room where Fra Domenico Buonvicini is tending the wounded of both sides.)

DYING FRIAR *(feebly.)*

A crucifix.

(Fra Domenico holds a crucifix to the lips of the dying man who kisses it.)

Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum !

(He falls back dead, and Fra Domenico turns his attention immediately to other wounded and dying men.)

FRA ENRICO *(fighting fiercely.)*

Long live Christ !

(The friars and the Piagnoni renew their assault upon the Arrabbiati and Compagnacci with redoubled vigor, and the fighting now reaches a tremendous height.)

FRIARS AND PIAGNONI

Long live Christ !

ARRABBIATI AND COMPAGNACCI

Death to the friars !

(There is a furious clashing of arms and many fall on both sides. Suddenly the Arrabbiati and Compagnacci fall back before the furious onslaught of their assailants, and are rushed from the room, many of the friars and of the Piagnoni following them down the corridor. With a cry of joy, Fra Benedetto is about to run from the library in pursuit of the retreating enemy, when he rushes into the arms of Savonarola who is entering the room.)

SAVONAROLA *(in a tone of earnest reproof.)*

Fra Benedetto, lay down these weapons and take up the cross.

(He puts his hand on the friar's shoulder, and Fra Benedetto suddenly humbles himself at the feet of the Prior.)

VOICES *(from without.)*

Long live Christ !

(The friars who have remained in the library, gather around Savonarola, as two mace-bearers from the Signory enter the room.)

FIRST MACE-BEARER

Girolamo Savonarola, Domenico Buonvicini, Silvestro Maruffi, you are commanded by the Signory to present yourselves at the palace immediately. We have been instructed to assure you that no harm will befall you.

SAVONAROLA

Have you this order in writing ?

SECOND MACE-BEARER

We were instructed to deliver it by word of mouth.

SAVONAROLA

Go back and tell the members of the Signory that we obey no command unless it be in writing.

(The mace-bearers depart and Savonarola, going to a cupboard, takes out the sacrament which he places beneath the arches of Michelozzi's vault, and motions to the friars to gather about him, which they do.)

My beloved children, in the presence of God, in the presence of the consecrated wafer, and with our enemies in the monastery, I confirm the truth of my doctrines. All that I have said hath come to me from God, and He is my witness in heaven that I speak no lie. I had not forseen that all the city would turn against me so quickly; nevertheless, God's will be done. My last exhortation to

ye is this : let faith, prayer, and patience be your weapons. I leave ye with anguish and grief, to give myself into my enemies' hands. I know not whether they will take my life, but certain am I, that, once dead, I shall be able to succor ye in heaven, far better than it hath been granted me to help ye on earth. Take comfort, embrace the cross, and by it ye shall find the way of salvation.

FRA BENEDETTO

You must not give yourself up. Your life is too useful to Florence to thus sacrifice it.

A FRIAR

Let us lower you from the walls.

A PIAGNONE

Yes ! You may remain hidden in my house, until it is safe for you to seek safety in flight.

SAVONAROLA *(hesitating.)*

Perhaps you are right. There may still be work for me to do in the Master's vineyard.

FRA MALATESTA

Should not the shepherd lay down his life for his sheep ?

SAVONAROLA *(moved.)*

You are right, Fra Malatesta. Let me embrace you for thus showing me my duty.

(He kisses him.)

Come Fra Domenico and Fra Silvestro.

(He looks around.)

Where is Fra Silvestro ?

FRA BENEDETTO

He was here a little while ago. He manned the mortar. I do not know where he has gone. But do not leave us. We cannot be without our shepherd.

SAVONAROLA *(sadly.)*

There has been too much bloodshed as it is.

(The mace-bearers enter the library and give Savonarola a document which he reads, and then turns to Buonvicini.)

Come, Fra Domenico.

(He and Buonvicini go to the mace-bearers who bind them, and then march with them through the broken doorway of the library which is lit by the lurid glare of the burning monastery. Fra Benedetto falls to his knees weeping, and then rushes to one of the windows and looks out. There is complete silence for a few seconds, and then a vast roar from the people in the square announces the fact of their awareness that Giralomo Savonarola has been taken a prisoner.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE THREE

FLORENCE, 1498

(The Square of Saint Mark's which is filled with people who press close to Savonarola, as he and Fra Domenico Buonvicini are pushed through the square by the Guardsmen of the Signory. Flaring torches and the glare from the burning monastery light the scene. The mace-bearers and the guards are having great difficulty in keeping their prisoners from being torn to pieces, and the howls of derision, and cries of joy and triumph of the people, raise an infernal din.)

MEMBERS OF THE COMPAGNACCI

Death to the friars !

MEMBERS OF THE ARRABBIATI

Down with Savonarola !

(The prisoners are pushed and jostled as they make their way through the throng, the guards being forced at times to use their pikes, in order to keep the people off.)

A VENDOR *(thrusting a lighted lantern in Savonarola's face.)*

Behold the true light !

(He laughs mockingly.)

A CARTER *(twisting Savonarola's fingers.)*

Now give a turn to the key !

(He strikes him.)

Name the one who has struck you, O prophet !

AN ARRABBIATO *(thrusting his torch in the face of Savonarola, and burning him.)*

Let there be light !

(The crowd roars its approval and mocks and jeers.)

A VENDOR *(kicking Savonarola in the buttocks.)*

Is this the seat o' ya prophecies ?

(At this there is a huge guffaw, and the soldiers in order to keep back the renewed press of the mob, make a fence of their shields and crossed spears, and amid the imprecations and yells of the people, pass out of the square with difficulty.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE FOUR

FLORENCE, 1498

(The torture-chamber in the Bargello. Giustini and Ruffo are sitting on the rack with their legs dangling over its side.)

GIUSTINI

It's bad business !

RUFFO

Uh-hunh !

GIUSTINI

I ain't never seed tha likes of it afore.

RUFFO

And ya has had a lot o' experience too.

GIUSTINI

Experience !

(He laughs shortly.)

There ain't a feller in all Italy wot's had more. I knows my trade if anybody does, and there's lots o' tricks o' tha trade too. I kin throw bones out o' jint with tha best of 'em.

RUFFO

How long has ya been workin' at tha game ?

GIUSTINI

I dunno, let's see.

(Counting on his fingers.)

Ten years with tha Dook o' Luchesi ; five years with Count dell' Orte ; six years with Lorenzer ; and at the Bargeller ever since tha fall o' Piero. They says I kin get confessions better nor any man in Italy.

RUFFO

Wot was ya most interestin' experience ?

GIUSTINI *(reflecting.)*

Tha Duchess o' Garda was a bird. Tha Dook suspected her o' havin' a lover, so he ups and sticks her on tha rack, and she squeals

like a good un. All he wanted ter find out was tha name o' tha man, and if she doesn't up and spill tha names of all of her lovers which takes in tha names o' half tha gallants o' Garda, by tha Blessed Womb o' tha Holy Virgin ! Since tha Dook couldn't go in fer killin' half tha gallants o' Garda' thout losin' his own blinkin' life, if he don't up and kill tha lady as she was bound ter tha rack, and as naked as tha day she was born.

RUFFO *(laughing.)*

Tha laugh was on tha Dook, all right !

(He slaps his knee in appreciation of the tale.)

GIUSTINI

But I'm gittin' kine o' sick o' tha game. This Friar has been one too many fer me. Yestiddy he was on tha rack more 'n a dozen times, afore he would give tha testimony they wanted. Tha minute tha pain 'ud stop, he'd retract all what he said, and tha whole dirty business was ter do over again.

RUFFO

A man's a fool ter be so stubborn. If I was stuck on tha rack, I'd confess ter bein' tha Holy Virgin, afore I'd allow 'em ter pull me ter pieces.

GIUSTINI

Yes, it's heart rendin' tha way that pore Friar sticks up fer tha truth. He's tha most nervous man I ever seed under pain, and he begins ter rave quicker nor quick, and tha moment tha pain stops, he ups and denies all that he's been made ter say.

RUFFO

He's a fool ! He knows he has ter give in sooner or later, so why don't he agree and let tha whole business go, and avoid a lot o' trouble ?

GIUSTINI

Well, I admires his guts. Here he is all wore out from pain, and dragged in ter his judges, and he retracts all wot he's been made ter

say. It seems ter me that there's a flame in him, when he looks at them judges with his big grey eyes, almost too sick ter speak, and a-shakim' his head in denial. It's awful ! Ya gotta respect a feller wot does that. And he done Florence a lot' o' good too, and it's a pity it's all gone ter hell again. It's a pity, it is.

RUFFO

Wot's goin' ter happen ter him ?

GIUSTINI

Flesh and blood can't stand wot he has ter go through, and when them judges has pulled out all o' tha testimony they wants of him he'll be burned or hanged or both. It's a dirty business !

RUFFO

Well, ya can't do nawthin' about it.

GIUSTINI

Yes I kin too. I makes it as easy fer him as I dares. I twists as gentle as I kin, and gives him as much water as I kin sneak under tha eyes o' tha judges. I almost blubbed yestiddy. That Friar knows that I'm doin' my best fer him, and ter see him smile at me after I've nigh killed him, almost knocks me out. Once I give him a little wine, and as pale as a ghost and with tha sweat pourin' offen him, he gasps out : "thank ya, my son," and I tells ya, I most broke down and bellered like a blinkin' baby.

(With great vehemence.)

Pox take them dorgs wot kin so hurt a man ter gits lies out o' him !

RUFFO

Well, ya can't do anything about it. Them fellers runs things ter git wot they wants, and they ain't goin' ter change it none, neither.

GIUSTINI

That's right too. But I'm sick o' hurtin' this here Friar, and by

Gord, he's a holy man if there ever was one ! Christ only knows wot they'll be doing ter him ter-morrer.

RUFFO

Fergit tha Friar. He reminds me of a feller in Rome wot was brought ter me fer—

CURTAIN

EPISODE FIVE

FLORENCE, 1498

(A great room in the Bargello that adjoins the torture-chamber. Seated on a dais are : the Bishop of Vasona, Francesco Romolino, Giovacchino Turriano, Piero degli Alberti, Giuliano Mazzinghi, Doffo Spini, and other members of the governing body of Florence, all of whom are arrayed in magnificent robes of office. The doors to the torture-chamber are open, and through them comes a red glare that lights the faces of the men sitting in judgment. As the curtain rises, the screams of Savonarola, who is being tortured on the rack, penetrate the room. The noise of the winding of the windlass that pulls taut the ropes of the rack is heard also. Below the dais, notaries and scribes are writing evidence. The Bishop of Vasona raises his hand, and the torture stops.)

VASONA

Bring in the prisoner.

(Giustini and Ruffo bring in Savonarola who can scarcely walk. He is as white as death, and almost falls to the ground with every step that he takes.)

Fra Girolamo Savonarola, since we in our mercy have not sent you to Rome for trial, we hereby request in return for our clemency

that you sign these depositions that we have prepared, and answer some further questions, and thereby spare us and yourself further agony.

SAVONAROLA *(half raving).*

Tolle, tolle, Domine, animam meam !

VASONA

Admit your doctrines to be false.

SAVONAROLA *(regaining his composure.)*

My doctrines are true.

VASONA *(sternly.)*

Prisoner, on pain of further torture, admit that your doctrines are the machinations of the Devil.

SAVONAROLA *(superbly.)*

Ye tempt the Lord !

VASONA *(angrily.)*

On pain of further torture, admit that your prophecies were false.

SAVONAROLA

Leave this matter alone ; if my prophecies were of God, ye will receive manifest proof ; if of man, they will fall to the ground. Whether I be or be not a prophet is no concern of the State ; and no man hath the right to condemn or judge the intention of other men.

VASONA

Have you, or have you not sown the seeds of discords within the Church ?

SAVONAROLA

I have scourged the Church so that it may be regenerated. To forward this end, I have preached things by which all Christians might know the abominations committed in Rome, and might unite in forming a council which if once assembled, would, as I hoped, lead to the degradation of many prelates, and even of the Pope; and

I should have sought to be present, and was determined, when there, to preach and do things of which I might be proud.

VASONA

Have you ever acted with the desire of becoming Pope ?

SAVONAROLA

No, for had I accomplished this work, I should have deemed myself higher than any cardinal or Pope.

SPINI *(snarling.)*

It is true, is it not, that you have extorted State secrets by means of the confessional ?

SAVONAROLA *(indignantly.)*

I have never meddled with the State. My sole aim was to promote free government and all measures tending to its improvement. I advocated the election of a perpetual Grand Gonfalonier.

SPINI *(snarling.)*

You involve the truth in a thousand obscurities, and feign sanctity to gain lasting fame.

(To a Notary.)

Ceccone, write carefully all that this prisoner has to say, for he is very subtle, and, therefore, it is easy to make mistakes in the transcription.

CECCONE *(rising and giving a document to Spini.)*

Here is the transcription of yesterday's proceedings.

(Spini takes the document, and glancing over it, hands it back to Ceccone who resumes his seat.)

SPINI *(to Savonarola.)*

Is all that is written here true ?

SAVONAROLA

That which I have written is true. My doctrine is known to ye, and known to all. In my present tribulation, I ask ye only two

things : to have care of the novices, and to preserve them in the Christian doctrine to which we have kept them steadfast hitherto.

VASONA

Are the things to which you have subscribed, true or false ?

SAVONAROLA

Ye tempt the Lord !

SPINI *(to Vasona.)*

My Lord Bishop, this snivelling hypocrite would gain the pity of the court with a mock piety. All that he does is for pride and worldly glory.

VASONA

Have you ever maintained that Jesus Christ was only a man ?

SAVONAROLA *(contemptuously.)*

Only a fool could ask that !

VASONA

Have you believed in charms ?

SAVONAROLA *(calmly.)*

I have always made a mock of them.

ROMOLINO

Who were your accomplices in the matter of the council that you would have called to enquire into the corruption of Rome ?

SAVONAROLA

I advised with no man on the matter of the council, and only spoke of it in these last days to one or two of my brethren. I have never had any communication with the potentates of Italy, inasmuch as I considered them all as my foes. Nevertheless, I hoped that the foreign rulers would favor the undertaking, on account of the evil conduct of the Roman court, and had especial hope in the King of England, having heard that he was a good man. As to cardinals and prelates, I regarded them all as my enemies.

ROMOLINO

Have you ever caused the secrets of the confessional to be revealed to you ?

SAVONAROLA

I have never made any such request, nor would it have been granted me by my friars, had I done so.

ROMOLINO *(furiously.)*

If you continue to evade these questions, it will be all the harder for you. Drop this pretended piety and tell us the truth.

SAVONAROLA *(impressively.)*

Lord Bishop, ye Apostolic Commissioners, ye Signory of Florence, I have denied my divine light through fear of further torment. If I must perforce suffer, I will suffer for the truth ; all that I have declared hath come to me from God !

(He sways from pain and weakness and is supported by Giustini and Ruffo.)

VASONA

Was the Cardinal of Naples concerned in the affair of the council ?

SAVONAROLA

I have answered the question.

ROMOLINO *(furiously.)*

No evasion now, was the Cardinal of Naples concerned in the affair of the council ?

SAVONAROLA

No.

ROMOLINO *(beside himself with rage.)*

You lie !

SPINI *(to Romolino.)*

Why temporize further with this dog? The rack is not persuasive enough, it seems. Let us try other means of persuasion.

(To Vasona.)

My Lord Bishop, have we your permission to try further means of torture ?

VASONA *(in an oily tone of voice.)*

Any method by which this poor lost soul may be brought to repentance, is approved of by the Holy Church.

SPINI *(fiercely to Giustini.)*

Take the prisoner back to the torture-chamber, suspend him from the rafters, and apply live coals to the soles of his feet.

(Giustini and Ruffo take Savonarola into the adjoining room.)

VASONA *(to Romolino.)*

He is the most obdurate heretic that I have ever tried.

ROMOLINO

I have never seen the like of it.

(A terrific shriek followed by another and another, comes from the torture-chamber. Spini grins in diabolical satisfaction.)

VASONA *(stopping the torture by a signal.)*

Was the Cardinal of Naples concerned in the affair of the council ?

(There is no reply, and Vasona signals for the torture to recommence, and again the shrieks of Savonarola fill the room. The Bishop signals to Giustini to stop and the shrieks cease.)

Was the Cardinal of Naples concerned in the affair of the council ?

SAVONAROLA'S VOICE *(very faintly.)*

No.

(Again the Bishops signals to Giustini to resume the torture, and once more the shrieks of Savonarola ring through the room.)

VASONA

Was the Cardinal of Naples concerned in the affair of the council ?

VOICE OF SAVONAROLA *(maddened with pain.)*

Naples ! Naples ! I took council with him and with others !

VASONA AND THE OTHER JUDGES

Ah !

(Ceccone writes this testimony feverishly and the Bishop of Vasona signals to Giustini to stop, and wipes the sweat from his brow.)

VASONA *(to Giustini.)*

Bring in the prisoner.

(Giustini and Ruffo half carry in Savonarola who is as white as death and almost insensible from pain.)

ROMOLINO *(through his teeth.)*

Was the Cardinal of Naples concerned in the affair of the council ?

(Unable to speak, but looking directly at his questioner, Savonarola shakes his head in denial.)

SPINI *(springing to his feet.)*

By God, never has such obduracy been seen before ! If you hope to gain the sympathy of the court by this conduct, you are mistaken. For the last time we ask you, was the Cardinal of Naples concerned in the affair of the council ?

SAVONAROLA *(swaying in the arms of Giustini and Ruffo.)*

Neither with the Cardinal of Naples, nor with others, have I spoken any word of the council.

SPINI *(dancing up and down with rage.)*

You are a liar ! To the rack with him ! To the rack with him !

(Savonarola falls back in a dead faint, to be caught in the arms of Giustini and Ruffo.)

CURTAIN

EPISODE SIX

FLORENCE, 1498

(A small room in the Bargello. Romolino and the Bishop of Vasona are seated, and standing facing them is Fra Domenico Buonvicini guarded by gaolers.)

BUONVICINI

I know no more, for my sole concern has been to lead a virtuous life, with Jesus Christ as King of Florence. Thus if, not believing me, ye should even put me to torture anew, ye will discover no more; for there is naught else to be said; and ye will bring me nigh unto death, God's will be done.

VASONA *(severely.)*

Do you think that Fra Girolamo Savonarola was a false prophet ?

BUONVICINI

I have never perceived, nor had the least occasion to suspect that my Father, Fra Girolamo, was a deceiver, or that he has acted falsely in any wise. On the contrary, I have held him to be a thoroughly upright and most extraordinary man. And having a great reverence for him, I hoped, by his means, to receive grace from God, and be enabled thereby to do some good to the souls of men. And holding him to be a man of God, I obeyed him as my superior with all single-mindedness and zeal.

VASONA

That will do.

(To the gaolers.)

Reconduct the prisoner to his cell.

(The gaolers go out with Fra Domenico Buonvicini.)

ROMOLINO

There's nothing further to be got out of him.

VASONA

No. I think that he is a holy man, Commissioner.

ROMOLINO *(laughing.)*

Yes, but that makes no difference.

VASONA

After all, Savonarola is the man whom we want. Has Maruffi been tortured to-day ?

ROMOLINO *(laughing.)*

There's no need to torture him, for he says anything and writes anything that we wish, and after a ridiculously small amount of torture.

VASONA

I am for letting him and Buonvicini go free of the death sentence.

ROMOLINO *(earnestly.)*

That is as you see fit, Bishop, but the death of two miserable friars more or less, can make but little difference. I think that it is as well to hang them with Savonarola, since it will be a lesson to all monks who might attempt to do this sort of thing at any future time. Holy Church cannot be attacked with impunity.

VASONA

Now that I come to think of it, you are right, Commissioner. We shall hang all three of them. It has been a particularly difficult trial.

ROMOLINO *(laughing.)*

Yes, thanks to the stubborness of Savonarola, but all's well that ends well.

CURTAIN

EPISODE SEVEN

FLORENCE, 1498

(Savonarola's cell in prison. He is lying on a straw pallet, and a gaoler is bathing his feet with oil.)

SAVONAROLA *(smiling faintly.)*

Thank you, my son, you have been very kind to me.

GAOLER

How could anyone help but be kind ter ya, Father ?

SAVONAROLA *(sighing.)*

I have suffered much through unkindness.

GAOLER

Is there anything that I kin do fer ya, Father ?

SAVONAROLA

Could you obtain writing materials for me? I have a last few words to write.

GAOLER *(heartily.)*

That I will, Father ! Is there anything else ?

SAVONAROLA

Shall I see Fra Domenico and Fra Silvestro before we go to the scaffold to-morrow ?

GAOLER

Permission's been granted ya ter give them friars Holy Communion, ter-morrer.

(He goes to a door and calls.)

Giuseppe bring writin' materials.

(Footsteps are heard descending stone stairs.)

He'll bring 'em right away, Father.

SAVONAROLA

Thank you, my son.

(The curtain falls to denote the passage of time, and rises immediately, disclosing Savonarola alone in his cell. He is sitting at a small table, finishing the last words of his manuscript in the rays of a single candle. He reads aloud what he has written.)

Sinner that I be, where shall I turn ? To the Lord, whose mercy is infinite. None may take glory in himself. All the saints tell us that not unto us, but unto the Lord be glory. Strengthen me in Thy spirit, O Lord ! I beseech Thee, look on Thy Church, and behold in these days, more infidels than Christians are numbered in its fold, and how every one doth make a god of his belly. Where be now the glory of the apostles, the fortitude of the martyrs, the holy simplicity of the monks ? I will put my hope in the Lord, and he will haste to deliver me from—

CURTAIN

EPISODE EIGHT

FLORENCE, 1498

(The Square of the Signory with the Palace of the Signory at the back. To the right is the Lodge of the Signory, and at the left are a few houses huddled together with the cathedral and the Bargello towering over them. A scaffold built on a platform about four feet from the ground, extends from the centre of the square to the "ringhiera" of the palace. At the far end of the scaffold the gibbet is placed. This consists of a stout

beam with another nailed across it, giving the effect of a shortened cross. From the cross-beam hang three nooses and three chains. Heaps of faggots are piled at the foot of the gibbet. Near the great portal of the palace, three platforms have been erected in the "ringhiera" for the Bishop of Vasona, the Apostolic Commissioners, the Grand Gonfalonier, and the members of the Eight. The square is crowded with people who gesticulate and talk noisily. As the curtain rises, a pickpocket is attempting to cut the girdle-wallet of a burgher.)

BURGHER *(grabbing the pickpocket by the wrist.)*

No you don't, my lad !

(He gives him a mighty blow with a huge fist and knocks him senseless.)

Ho, Guardsmen !

(Two Guardsmen dressed in cuirasses, doublets, and hose, and wearing pointed steel helmets, force their way through the crowd to the burgher.)

FIRST GUARDSMAN

What's the matter ?

BURGHER *(pointing to the senseless pickpocket at his feet.)*

I caught him at my wallet.

SECOND GUARDSMAN

We'll take him to the Bargello.

(They drag the unconscious pickpocket away.)

A WOMAN

What'll they do to him ?

BURGHER *(grinning.)*

They'll slit his ears and nostrils, my pretty jade, and send him to the galleys.

WOMAN *(shuddering.)*

But he didn't do anything !

BURGHER *(shortly.)*

No fault of his !

A VENDOR *(threading his way through the crowd.)*

Pasties, pasties, fresh made pasties.

(Two gutter-snipes approach him from in front and from behind. The lad in the rear kicks him, and as he turns to this tormentor, the lad in front snatches a handful of his wares and makes off with them.)

Help ! Help ! Stop Thief !

(There is a cry of "Stop Thief !" but no attempt at pursuit is made, as the people do not wish to lose their places.)

A BEGGAR *(making his way through the crowd.)*

Alms, for the love o' Christ, alms !

(Money is thrust into his hands by various persons whom he thanks profusely.)

BURGHER *(excitedly.)*

There he is !

MANY VOICES

Where ? Where ?

(There is a great surging to that part of the scaffold upon which the faggots are piled.)

A GUARDSMAN

Back fools, back ! Does ya want ter be roasted ?

A CHILD

Mother, why are those chains hanging with the ropes ?

MOTHER

To keep the wicked friars from falling into the fire ; after they have been hanged.

CHILD

I wanna drink !

MOTHER

Not now, Lippo. I've no water to give you.

CHILD *(bawling.)*

I wanna drink !

MOTHER

Hush Lippo !

CHILD *(screaming.)*

I wanna drink !

MOTHER *(cuffing him.)*

Hold your tongue, stupid !

AN OLD WOMAN *(offering the child a drink from her wine flagon.)*

Here, drink this, my pretty.

MOTHER

It's very kind of you. Thank her Lippo.

(Abashed, the child makes a few gurgling noises in lieu of thanks, and hides his face in his mother's skirt.)

He's very shy. It is kind of you to give him a drink. Waiting's hard on the little ones.

OLD WOMAN

I've been here since seven. Why don't they begin ?

MOTHER

We've been here since eight ; but it's not every day that a heretic is burned.

OLD WOMAN

No. I'm seventy-six, and it's the first time I've seen it.

A SOLDIER

Savonarola, we want Savonarola !

MANY VOICES

Savonarola, we want Savonarola !

(There are hisses, catcalls, groans, blasphemies, indecent cries, and joyous sounds of anticipation anent witnessing the horror. The throng surges toward the gibbet to be thrust back by the pikes of the guardsmen.)

OLD WOMAN

Did you see the trial by fire ?

MOTHER

No, I was in Siena at the time. My Cousin 'Betta was having her first baby, and...

OLD WOMAN *(cutting her short.)*

We waited all day and nothing happened. The friar was a liar.

MOTHER

Lippo !

(She slaps the child soundly.)

You piddling little beast ! Now look at your nice doublet and hose, all spoiled ! Do you think that it rains florins at our house, so that you can have a new suit ? And your poor father working so hard that he could not come even to-day ! You filthy little boy ! I'll never take you to see another heretic burned as long as you live !

(She gives the child another slap and he sets up a wail.)

Now stop your noise !

(The child chokes back his sobs and sniffles until the small tempest of sound completely dies away.)

A NOBLEMAN

They're a long time in bringing him, Paolo.

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Magic !

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Magic !

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Yes, Ugo, they say that he turned green last night and that fire spurted from his mouth and nostrils, and that the Devil undid the cords that bound him to the rack.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

If he escapes this time, we're lost !

A BOY

Down with Savonarola !

SECOND NOBLEMAN

The people have turned against him at last. It was the fire that did it. The Compagnacci are clever.

A CARTER *(shouting.)*

Bring us Savonarola !

MANY VOICES

Bring us Savonarola ! We want Savonarola !

SECOND NOBLEMAN

You see, the people are no longer his friends.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

A good thing too. He was getting much too powerful. But I'm squeamish Paolo, I hate to see a man burned.

SECOND NOBLEMAN

The Eight have been merciful, they hang him first. For my part, I should like to see the Friar dance, for he burned my pictures, curse him !

FIRST NOBLEMAN *(laughing.)*

That's no great loss, Paolo.

SECOND NOBLEMAN *(offended.)*

I have been told by della Robbia that I have talent. What's that ?

(A vast roar rises from the assembled mob, as through the portal of the palace appear : the Grand Gonfalonier, the Eight, the Apostolic Commissioners, and the Bishop of Vasona. All of them are arrayed in the magnificent robes of their respective offices.)

A SOLDIER

Bring us Savonarola !

FIRST NOBLEMAN

The Bishop looks unhappy. He seems to be overwhelmed with confusion.

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Small wonder, for his part has been anything but an honest one !

A GIRL

Down with Savonarola ! Long live the Arrabbiati !

MEMBERS OF THE ARRABBIATI

Death to Savonarola ! Long live the Arrabbiati !

MEMBERS OF THE COMPAGNACCI

Death to the friars ! Long live the Compagnacci !

A CUTTHROAT

I wants tha Friar's liver !

A PROSTITUTE

I wants his heart, for he took my livin' away !

ANOTHER PROSTITUTE

I wants his eyes, 'cause Vincenzo left me after one of his sermons.

FIRST PROSTITUTE

I don't think much of a man wot'll leave a girl for a sermon.

SECOND PROSTITUTE

Vincenzo was good ter me until that damn Friar got him away. I ain't had no man like him since.

(The executioner comes through the portal of the palace, leading Silvestro Maruffi, Domenico Buonvicini, and Girolamo Savonarola. They are greeted by a roar from the assembled multitude. The friars are clad in penitential haircloth. Suddenly the roaring mob is silent, as though oppressed by a sense of fear.)

FIRST PROSTITUTE *(whimpering.)*

They say he'll bring a hail of fire and brimstone upon Florence, and that the earth'll swallow us up.

SECOND PROSTITUTE *(shuddering.)*

Some of his prophecies has come true.

A SOLDIER

Anti-Christ, take that !

(He flings his dagger at the head of Savonarola as he passes down the "ringhiera" and, missing him, it strikes the wall of the palace and is shattered into bits.)

A DOMINICAN FRIAR *(to the executioner.)*

Strip these heretics of their robes.

(The three friars take off their habits.)

SAVONAROLA *(giving his habit to the Dominican.)*

Holy gown, how dearly did I long to wear you ; you were granted me by God's grace, and I have kept you ever unstained. Now I forsake you not, but am bereft of you.

(He and his two companions are greatly moved as the Dominican takes the three habits.)

A KITCHEN WENCH

Tha Friar ain't much of a man, look at his legs.

SEVERAL VOICES

Yah, ole bandy-legs !

FIRST KITCHEN WENCH

If he ain't got no more manhood nor he has legs, no wonder he's a friar.

SECOND KITCHEN WENCH

I know some friars...

(She giggles.)

FIRST KITCHEN WENCH

Some friars is friars afore they is men, and some friars is men afore they is friars.

(The three friars are hastily robed in sacerdotal garments and brought before the Bishop of Vasona. Overwhelmed by confusion, and trembling, he unfrocks Maruffi and Buonvicini. When he begins to unfrock Savonarola, his hands tremble so that he can hardly accomplish the task.)

VASONA *(in a faltering voice.)*

"Separo te ab Ecclesia militante atque triumphante."

SAVONAROLA *(calmly.)*

"Militante, non triumphante : hoc inim tuum non est."

A FRANCISCAN FRIAR *(to a companion.)*

The Bishop is confused, he connot separate him from the Church triumphant, only from the Church militant.

SECOND FRANCISCAN FRIAR

It is not a wonder that he is confused.

(He shakes his head.)

This is bad business.

FIRST FRANCISCAN FRIAR

Fra Girolamo is a holy man. But he was a fool to flout the Pope!

(The executioner leads the three friars before the Apostolic Commissioners, and the people suddenly become silent.)

ROMOLINO

Silvestro Maruffi, Domenico Buonvicini, Girolamo Savonarola, after due deliberation, we, the Apostolic Commissioners find you guilty of schism and heresy, and do hereupon deliver you over to the secular arm for punishment. His Holiness, our Lord Alexander Sixth is pleased to deliver you from the pains of purgatory, giving you plenary indulgence of your sins, and restoring you to your first innocence. Do you accept it ?

(The three friars bow their heads in assent, and they are led before the Grand Gonfalonier and the members of the Eight.)

GRAND GONFALONIER

Silvestro Maruffi, Domenico Buonvicini, Girolamo Savonarola, the Gonfalonier, and the Eight, having well considered the trials of the three friars, and the enormous crimes which they reveal, and having considered the sentence of the Pope, which consigns them to the secular tribunal for punishment, decree that each one of the three friars shall be hanged on the gallows, and then burned in order that their souls may be seperated entirely from their bodies.

MANY VOICES

Long live the Gonfalonier ! Long live the Eight ! Death to the friars !

(The executioner leads the three friars to the gibbet, ragged little boys poking at their feet through the interstices of the platform, while the rabble flings mud, dung, and stones at them. The friars show an almost superhuman courage as they march along the platform with a firm step. Savonarola's lips move in a recital of the "Apostles' Creed" which is repeated too softly to be heard.)

A BYSTANDER *(as Savonarola passes him.)*

Be comforted, this day you will be with Him in paradise.

SAVONAROLA

At the last hour, God alone gives mortals comfort.

BUONVICINI *(in a loud voice.)*

We praise Thee, O God! We acknowledge Thee to be the Lord! All...

EXECUTIONER *(furiously.)*

Stop your gabble!

(He strikes him in the mouth, and there is a murmur of dissent from members of the Piagnoni who are present in disguise. From then on, the lips of Buonvicini move, as he whispers the words of the "Te deum" to himself.)

A PRIEST *(to Savonarola.)*

In what spirit do you bear this martyrdom ?

SAVONAROLA *(smiling sweetly.)*

The Lord hath suffered so much for me !

(The executioner and the three friars approach the ladder which mounts to the cross-beam of the gibbet. He pushes Maruffi up it, and follows him. When both have arrived at the cross-beam, the noose and the chains are placed about the throat and body of the friar.)

FRA SILVESTRO

"In manus tuas, Domine, commendo animam meam."

(He is thrust off the platform, and after a few spasmodic jerks, his body dangles quiet.)

AN ARRABBIATI

That's the way for a friar to dance !

(The mob utters a howl of approval. The executioner motions to Buonvicini.)

BUONVICINI *(stopping a moment in his ascent of the ladder.)*

O People, keep this well in mind, the prophecies of Fra Girolamo will all be fulfilled, and we die content !

(He continues to mount to the cross-beam, and the noose and chains are placed about him by the executioner and he is then thrust off the platform and in a few moments becomes a dangling corpse.)

A TINKER

That's tha way, Executioner ! Make 'em dance ! Make 'em dance !

EXECUTIONER

He'll dance in hell forever, he will.

(He descends the ladder and motions to Savonarola to mount to the cross-beam. Half way up the ladder, the Friar stops for a moment and calmly looks down upon the vast throng of people, who present a sea of upturned faces to him. The mob which has been howling and gesticulating violently up to this moment, becomes suddenly silent. Not a sound is heard, and a sense of horror sweeps over the multitude. Then the two continue their ascent to the gibbet, and the executioner places the noose and chains about Savonarola.)

A VENDOR

O prophet, now is the time for a miracle !

(The executioner thrusts Savonarola off the platform and signals to the guardsmen below, who light the faggots with their torches.)

A GUARDSMAN *(poking the blazing faggots with his pike.)*

At last I can burn the Friar who would have liked to burn me.

(The executioner straddles the cross-beam of the gibbet, and violently jerking the chains about Savonarola, causes the still quivering body to dance wildly. As the flames reach the bodies of the friars, he gives vent to a loud guffaw, and losing his

balance, barely manages to keep from falling into the flames, by swinging his body to the ladder, after having caught at one of the rungs successfully. The flames, swept by a gust of wind, are blown away from the corpses for a few moments, and the people cringe in alarm.)

MANY VOICES *(frightened.)*

A miracle ! A miracle !

(In a few moments the flames sweep over the corpses, and consuming the nooses, cause the bodies to fall to the length of their chains, a distance of a few inches.)

SEVERAL WOMEN *(screaming in alarm.)*

They move ! They move ! They are coming back to life !

(The cords that bind the arms of the corpse of Savonarola are severed by the flames, and the hands move.)

DISGUISED MEMBERS OF THE PIAGNONI *(to one another.)*

See, he blesses us !

(Unmindful of the rabble, they fall to their knees to be violently kicked to their feet by members of the Arrabbiati and the Compagnacci. By this time, the bodies of the three friars are half consumed by the flames, and portions of their entrails and other internal organs fall to the square and into the flames, from time to time.)

A BYSTANDER

See, it's raining guts and blood !

(At this, the Arrabbiati and the Compagnacci cheer wildly, and the Piagnoni sob bitterly.)

A CARTER *(making his way to the pyre.)*

I'll have a bit of the Friar for my dog.

(Dragging his dog to the pyre, he secures a bit of the offal which the dog eats eagerly.)

There Ruffo ! And it ain't every dog wot gits a dainty morsel of fried friar neither !

(The Piagnoni force their way through the throng and attempt to secure these ghastly remains for decent burial. They are rudely thrust back by the Guardsmen of the Signory.)

A GUARDSMAN *(thrusting at a woman with his pike.)*

No ya don't me beauty ! We have orders ter guard tha remains of tha friars. We don't want no miracles worked by this muck.

(A member of the Piagnoni manages to get a piece of the remains. She is a young woman of great beauty, and just as she is about to secrete the offal, she is caught by a member of the Arrabbiati who slashes at her with his dagger, and cuts her hand severely. Her screams attract the attention of a Guardsman who rushes up. The member of the Arrabbiati hands him the offal and points to the woman.)

GUARDSMAN *(to woman.)*

Serves ya damn well right !

(He pushes her away and calls to another guardsman.)

Enrico, we'll have ter clear tha square o' tha damned Piagnoni.

ENRICO

They're disguised, Bicci.

MANY VOICES

Long live the Eight !

(This cheer is occasioned because the Bishop of Vasona, the Apostolic Commissioners, the Grand Gonfalonier, and the Eight have risen from their seats, and are slowly reëntering the palace by the great portal.)

A CAPTAIN OF GUARDSMEN

Clear the square of everybody !

(He signals and several guardsmen blow a fanfare on trumpets and a company of guardsmen issue from the Lodge of the

Signory at the right. These clear the square, sending the people off at left. When the crowd has dispersed, three corpses, partially consumed by the flames, are seen dangling over a rapidly dying fire, surrounded by a circle of guardsmen with their pikes held straight out in front of them. In the distance is heard the ever diminishing mutter of the people and the fanfare of the trumpets.)

CURTAIN

SAN MINIATO*

*Reprinted from *Florentines*, through the courtesy of Messrs George Allen and Unwin, Limited, Ruskin House, 40 Museum Street, W. C. I. London, England.

FLORENCE AT THE PRESENT TIME

(The city of Florence from the hill of San Miniato. It is drenched in moonlight, and in the foreground are seen : the Arno and its quays, with the Ponte Vecchio at the extreme left. At the extreme right, the city is lost behind cypresses. In the middle distance are seen : the cathedral with Giotto's tower, and the Palazzo Vecchio. In the distance, the spurs of the foothills of the Apennines are barely discerned.

Seated on the stone balustrade of a belvedere, a Dominican friar is holding in his lap a great tome which is closed. Ecstatically he looks at the scene before him, his lips moving in silent prayer.)

THE FRIAR *(speaking softly.)*

Florence is veiled in moonlit mystery...
Giotto's mellow dreaming rears to heaven...
The Arno calmly winds its way to sea.

Hushed are the clamors of old rivalry.
For seething tumults'age is mighty leaven.
Florence is veiled in moonlit mystery.

Savonarola, Spini, Medici.
Tornabuoni—all their odds are even.
The Arno calmly winds its way to sea.

In their brute slavery they thought them free.
Dear God, to whom is freedom ever given ?
Florence is veiled in moonlight mystery.

Where is the pomp and might and tyranny
Of those who had their city all but riven ?
The Arno calmly winds its way to sea.

But magic-sweet is pastel Tuscany !
And sweet to drift a-down her streams barge-driven !
Florence is veiled in moonlit mystery.
The Arno calmly winds its way to sea.

CURTAIN

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